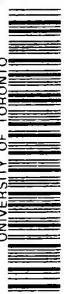


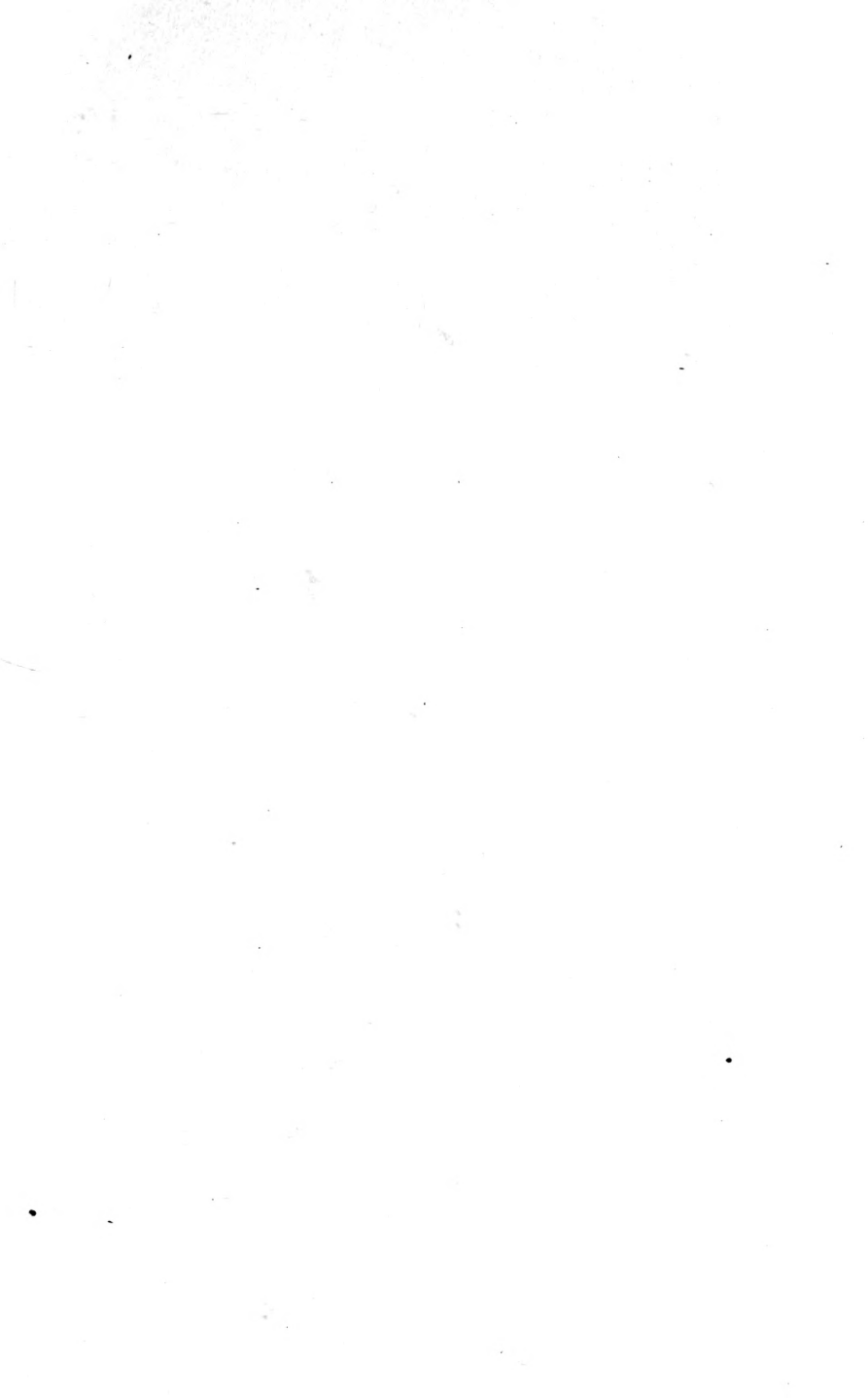
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*James Buchanan*

L I F E  
OF  
JAMES BUCHANAN

FIFTEENTH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

BY  
GEORGE TICKNOR CURTIS

*IN TWO VOLUMES*

VOL. II.

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1883

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# CONTENTS.

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## CHAPTER I.

1848—1852.

	PAGE
Purchase of Wheatland—Nomination and Election of General Taylor—His Death and the Accession of President Fillmore—The Compromise Measures of 1850—Letters to Miss Lane—Public Letters on Political Topics.....	1

## CHAPTER II.

1852.

The Presidential Nominations of 1852—Election of General Franklin Pierce to the Presidency—Buchanan's Course in regard to the Nomination and the Election—His Efforts to defeat the Whig Candidate.....	34
---	----

## CHAPTER III.

1852—1853.

Personal and Political Relations with the President-Elect and with Mr. Marcy, his Secretary of State—Buchanan is offered the Mission to England—His own Account of the Offer, and his Reasons for accepting it—Parting with his Friends and Neighbors in Lancaster—Correspondence with his Niece.....	68
---	----

## CHAPTER IV.

1853—1856.

Arrival in London—Presentation to the Queen at Osborne—The Ministry of Lord Aberdeen—Mr. Marcy's Circular about Court Costumes, and the Dress Question at the English Court—Letters to Miss Lane.....	99
---	----

## CHAPTER V.

1853—1856.

	PAGE
Negotiations with Lord Clarendon—The Clayton-Bulwer Treaty and Affairs in Central America—The Crimean War and the new British Doctrine respecting the Property of Neutrals.....	126

## CHAPTER VI.

1853—1856.

British Enlistments in the United States—Recall of the English Minister at Washington—The Ostend Conference.....	134
---	-----

## CHAPTER VII.

1854—1855.

The Social Position of Mr. Buchanan and his Niece in England... ..	142
--	-----

## CHAPTER VIII.

1856.

Return to America—Nomination and Election to the Presidency—Signifi- cance of Mr. Buchanan's Election in respect to the Sectional Questions —Private Correspondence.....	169
--	-----

## CHAPTER IX.

1857—1858.

Inauguration as President—Selection of a Cabinet—The Disturbances in Kansas—Mr. Buchanan's Construction of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, and of the "Platform" on which he was elected—Final Admission of Kansas into the Union.....	187
--	-----

## CHAPTER X.

1857—1861.

Foreign Relations during Mr. Buchanan's Administration.....	211
---	-----



# CHAPTER XI.

1858—1860.

	PAGE
Complimentary Gift from Prince Albert to Mr. Buchanan—Visit of the Prince of Wales—Correspondence with the Queen—Minor Incidents of the Administration—Traits of Character—Letters to Miss Lane—Marriage of a young Friend.....	228

# CHAPTER XII.

1860—March and June.

The so-called "Covode Investigation".....	243
---	-----

# CHAPTER XIII.

Summary of the Slavery Questions from 1787 to 1860—The Anti-Slavery Agitation in the North—Growth and Political Triumph of the Republican Party—Fatal Divisions among the Democrats—Mr. Buchanan declines to be regarded as a Candidate for a second Election.....	262
--	-----

# CHAPTER XIV.

1860—October.

General Scott's "Views".....	297
------------------------------	-----

# CHAPTER XV.

1860—November.

Election of President Lincoln—The Secession of South Carolina—Nature of the Doctrine of Secession—President Buchanan prepares to encounter the Secession Movement—Distinction between making War on a State and enforcing the Laws of the United States.....	315
--	-----

# CHAPTER XVI.

1860—December.

The President's Annual Message of December 3, 1860.....	330
---	-----

## CHAPTER XVII.

1860—December.

	PAGE
Reception of the President's Message in the Cabinet, in Congress, and in the Country—The firm Attitude and wise Policy of Mr. Buchanan.....	352

## CHAPTER XVIII.

1860—December.

General Scott again advises the President—Major Anderson's Removal from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter—Arrival of Commissioners from South Carolina in Washington—Their Interview and Communication with the President—The supposed Pledge of the <i>Status Quo</i> —The "Cabinet Crisis" of December 29th—Reply of the President to the South Carolina Commissioners—The anonymous Diarist of the <i>North American Review</i> confuted.....	365
---	-----

## CHAPTER XIX.

December, 1860—January, 1861.

Resignation of General Cass from the Department of State—Reconstruction of the Cabinet which followed after the Resignations of Messrs. Cobb, Thompson, and Thomas.....	396
---	-----

## CHAPTER XX.

1860—December.

The Resignation of Secretary Floyd, and its Cause—Refutation of the Story of his stealing the Arms of the United States—General Scott's Assertions disproved.....	406
---	-----

## CHAPTER XXI.

November, 1860—March, 1861.

The Action of Congress on the Recommendations of the President's Annual Message—The "Crittenden Compromise"—Strange Course of the New York <i>Tribune</i> —Special Message of January 8, 1861.....	418
--	-----

CHAPTER XXII.

1861—January, February, and March.

	PAGE
The "Peace Convention"—Fort Sumter—The Star of the West fired upon in Charleston Harbor—Anderson's temporary Truce—The Harbor of Pensacola and Fort Pickens—The Communications between ex-President Tyler and President Buchanan.....	439

CHAPTER XXIII.

1861—January, February, and March.

Intervention of Virginia to prevent a Collision of Arms—Ex-President Tyler's Mission to the President—The President's Preparations to re-inforce Anderson, in case of necessity—The Montgomery Congress and the Confederate Provisional Government—Mr. Lincoln's Journey to Washington—The Neglects of Congress.....	471
--	-----

CHAPTER XXIV.

1861—February and March.

Commissioners from the Confederate Government—Mr. Jefferson Davis's Statement that they were invited by President Buchanan called in question.....	485
--	-----

CHAPTER XXV.

1861—February and March

Troops at the Capital—Inauguration of President Lincoln—Important and alarming Despatches from Major Anderson—Mr. Holt's Communication to President Lincoln—Attitude in which Mr. Buchanan left the Government to his Successor—His Departure for Wheatland.....	491
--	-----

CHAPTER XXVI.

1861.

Journey from Washington to Wheatland—Welcome from Friends and Neighbors—The Rancor of the Times makes Refutation a Duty of the Author—The Story of the "Cabinet Scene"—Mr. Seward's Charge against the late Administration—Pictures and Curiosities said to have been carried away from the White House—Miss Lane and the Almanach De Gotha—Private Conversations at Wheatland invented and put into the mouth of Mr. Buchanan and his Guests.....	507
--	-----

## CHAPTER XXVII.

1861.

	PAGE
Correspondence with Mr. Stanton, Mr. Holt, General Dix and others...	528

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

1862—1864.

Private Correspondence.....	574
-----------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XXIX.

1865—1868.

Marriage of Miss Lane—Letters to her and other Persons.....	631
---	-----

## CHAPTER XXX.

1868.

Death of Mr. Buchanan—His Character as a Statesman, a Man and a Christian.....	664
--	-----



WHEATLAND.

## LIFE OF JAMES BUCHANAN.

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### CHAPTER I.

1848—1852.

PURCHASE OF WHEATLAND—NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF GENERAL TAYLOR—HIS DEATH AND THE ACCESSION OF PRESIDENT FILLMORE—THE COMPROMISE MEASURES OF 1850—LETTERS TO MISS LANE—PUBLIC LETTERS ON POLITICAL TOPICS.

AT the distance of a little more than a mile from that part of the city of Lancaster where Mr. Buchanan had lived for many years, and a little beyond the corporate limits, there had long stood a substantial brick mansion on a small estate of twenty-two acres known as Wheatland, and sometimes called "The Wheatlands." The house, although not imposing, or indeed of any architectural beauty, was nevertheless a sort of *beau idéal* of a statesman's abode, with ample room and verge

for all the wants of a moderate establishment. Without and within, the place has an air of comfort, respectability, and repose. It had been for some years owned and occupied as a summer residence by the Hon. Wm. M. Meredith of Philadelphia, a very eminent lawyer, who became Secretary of the Treasury in the administration of President Taylor. The house stands about half way up a gently rising ground, and has a wide lawn stretching down to the county road, shaded by oaks, elms, and larches, interspersed with evergreens. The view from the front of the house, looking to the west of north, ranges over a broad expanse of the county of Lancaster, one of the richest of Pennsylvania's lovely domains, spread out in a map of highly cultivated farms, and dotted by the homesteads of a wealthy agricultural population. Behind the house stands a noble wood, which is reached through the gardens; and from the crown of the hill, in a southerly direction, the eye ranges over another fine valley of smaller extent. Coolness and peace pervade this attractive old place, and it is not singular that a man of Mr. Buchanan's habits and temperament, who could not afford time and had no strong tastes for large pursuits of agriculture, should have coveted this his neighbor's dwelling.

But he did not break the commandment in seeking it. A treaty between two persons for the purchase of an estate is not ordinarily a matter of much interest. But this one was conducted in a manner so honorable to both parties that a few words may be given to it. The buyer and the seller had always been on opposite political sides; but they were friends, and they were gentlemen. In the month of June, 1848, Mr. Buchanan, having heard that Mr. Meredith wished to sell this property, addressed to him the following letter:

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. MEREDITH.]

WASHINGTON, June 12, 1848.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have received an intimation from our friends Fordney and Reynolds that you are willing to sell the Wheatlands, for the price which you gave Mr. Potter for them. As I intend, in any event, to retire from public life on the 4th of March next, I should be pleased to become the purchaser. The terms of payment I could make agreeable to yourself; and I should be glad if you



would retain the possession until the autumn. In making this offer, I desire to purchase from you just what you purchased from Mr. Potter, and to pay you the same price which you paid him. If I have been misinformed in regard to your desire to sell, I know you will pardon this intrusion.

Yours, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

To this letter Mr. Meredith replied as follows :

[MR. MEREDITH TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

PHILADELPHIA, June 19, 1848.

MY DEAR SIR:—

On my return home a day or two since I had the pleasure of finding your letter. A month ago, I should probably have accepted your offer, as I had then an opportunity of securing a place in this neighborhood that would have suited me better in point of proximity than Wheatland. I have missed that, and it is now too late to make new arrangements for my family for the summer. I should not like to occupy the place after having sold it, for several reasons, and principally because the certainty of leaving it would tend to render the children uncomfortable through the season. These little people are imaginative and live very much on the future, and it would scarcely do to destroy all their little plans, and schemes, and expectations connected with the place at the very commencement of their holidays. I will therefore, with your permission, postpone the subject to the autumn, when, if I should be disposed to part with the place, I will do myself the pleasure of writing to you. Of course your offer does not stand over; but I will certainly make no disposition of the property without first offering it to you.

With great esteem, I am, sir, yours most respectfully,

W. M. MEREDITH.

In the autumn, Mr. Buchanan again wrote :

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. MEREDITH.]

WASHINGTON, September 25, 1848.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Upon my return to this city, on Saturday night, I found your letter to Mr. Fordney kindly offering to dispose of Wheatland, including all that you bought from Mr. Potter, to myself at the price you paid, and the matting in the house at a valuation. I accept this proposition, and you may consider the bargain closed.

Of the purchase-money I can conveniently pay \$1750 at present, and the remainder on or before the first of January. If, however, you should need it sooner, I can procure it without much difficulty.

You can make the deed when you think proper, and the affair of the matting may be arranged at any time.

With many thanks for your kindness,

I remain yours very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

In the succeeding month of November, the following letters passed between the two gentlemen :

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. MEREDITH.]

(Private.)

LANCASTER, November 21, 1848.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have seen Mr. Fordney since I came here, who read me a part of your second letter. From this I infer that you regret you had parted with Wheatland. Now, my dear sir, if you have the least inclination to retain it, speak the word and our bargain shall be as if it never had been. It will not put me to the least inconvenience, as I have an excellent house in Lancaster. Indeed I feel a personal interest in having you in the midst of our society; and if you should retain Wheatland, I know that after you shall be satisfied with fame and fortune, you will make this beautiful residence your place of permanent abode.

Please to address me at Paradise P. O., Lancaster county, as I shall be at my brother's, near that place, to-morrow evening, where I shall remain until Thursday evening.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. MEREDITH TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

PHILADELPHIA, November 23, 1848.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Your very kind letter was received yesterday, just as I was going to court in the morning, where I was kept without dinner till near six. I was then obliged to attend an evening engagement at seven. I mention these details to excuse myself for the apparent want of promptness in replying. I have in the first place to express to you my deep sense of the courtesy and consideration which induced you to make me the offer which your letter contains. I cannot accept it, because to do so would be to take advantage of your friendly impulses, which I ought not and cannot do. I have no doubt I shall find a place somewhere in the same county, and hope to call neighbors with you yet. I need not say how much I regret that Mr. Fordney should have been so indiscreet as to communicate my letter to you.

My furniture, etc., is now removed, and I will deliver possession at once, and I wish you heartily, my dear sir, many years of happiness there.

I am, always your obliged friend and servant,

W. M. MEREDITH.

In December the purchase-money was paid and the deed of the property was executed by Mr. Meredith. Mr. Buchanan soon afterwards transferred his household gods to Wheatland, and from that time until his death it was his permanent abode, when he did not occupy some official residence in Washington or in London. He removed to Wheatland the furniture which he had hitherto used in Washington and Lancaster, and made some new purchases. The style of everything was solid, comfortable, and dignified, without any show. The library was in the eastern wing of the house, and was entered by a hall running transversely from the main hall, which extended through the house from east and west, and was also entered from the principal parlor. At the window of the library farthest from the main hall was Mr. Buchanan's accustomed seat. Long years of honorable public service, however, and sore trials, are to be traced, before we reach the period when he finally retired to the repose of this peaceful retreat. He left office on the 4th of March, 1849, with a fixed purpose not to re-enter public life. But although he held no public position during the four years of General Taylor's and Mr. Fillmore's term, he could not avoid taking an active interest in public affairs; and it will be seen that he was not at liberty to decline all public service when his party in 1853 again came into power.

But it is now necessary to revert to the spring and summer of 1848, and to the state of things consequent upon the treaty which had been concluded with Mexico. The great acquisitions of territory made by the annexation of Texas, and the cession of New Mexico and California to the United States, had opened questions on which the Democratic and the Whig parties occupied very different positions. The acquisition of these countries was a Democratic measure; and had that party retained its control of the Federal Government, it is probable that its Northern and its Southern branches would have united upon some plan for disposing of the question of slavery in these new regions. The Whigs, on the other hand, although constituting the opposition, and as such acting against the administration of Mr. Polk and its measures, were far from being unanimous in their resistance to the treaty which Mr. Polk proposed to make with Mexico. There were very eminent Whigs who were opposed

to all acquisitions of new territory, for various reasons, and especially because of the tendency of such acquisitions to re-open questions about slavery. There were other very prominent men in the Whig party who were willing to have New Mexico and California added to the Union, and to trust to the chances of a harmonious settlement of all questions that might follow in regard to the organization of governments for those extensive regions. It may not only now be seen, but it was apparent to thoughtful observers at the time, that the true course for the Whig party to pursue, was to adopt as its candidate for the Presidency some one of its most eminent and experienced statesmen, who would represent a definite policy on this whole subject, either by an application of the so-called "Wilmot Proviso," or what was far better, considering the sectional feelings involved, by an extension to the Pacific Ocean of the Missouri Compromise line of division between free and slave territory. But there came about in the winter of 1848 one of those states of popular feeling, in which the people of this country have sometimes taken it for granted that military success, united with certain traits of character, is a good ground for assuming fitness of an individual for the highest civil station. Along with this somewhat hazardous assumption there runs at such times the vague and scarcely expressed idea that the Presidency of the United States is to be treated as a reward for distinguished military services. After General Taylor's return from his Mexican campaign, in which a series of brilliant victories were gained, on each occasion with a force numerically inferior to that of the enemy, he became at once a sort of popular idol. There were a good many elements in his personal character, which entitled him to strong esteem, and some which easily account for his sudden popularity. He had a blunt honesty and sincerity of purpose, which were backed by great strength of will, and prodigious energy as a warrior. The appellation of "Old Rough and Ready," bestowed on him by his soldiers, went straight to the popular heart. These indications of what has been called "availability" in the political nomenclature which has acquired a peculiar significance, were not lost upon that class of Whig politicians who were most disposed to be on the lookout for such means of political success. General Taylor,

although never a politician, and although, from his military life, he had rarely even voted at elections, was known to be a Whig, but, as he described himself, not an "Ultra Whig." He was at no pains to seek a nomination for the Presidency, but it was pretty well known that if it came to him unsought, he would accept it. At the same time, with the modesty and sincerity that belonged to his honest nature, he did not affect to conceal his own distrust of his fitness for the office. It was, with him, a matter which the people of the country were to decide. If they chose to call him to the office, he would discharge its duties to the best of his ability. The sagacity of that portion of the Whigs who expected to win a political victory with such a candidate, was not at fault. When the Whig national convention, which was to make the nomination, assembled at Philadelphia in June, (1848), it was found that both Mr. Clay and Mr. Webster were to be disregarded; and on the fourth balloting General Taylor received 171 votes out of 279. It is a remarkable fact, that although this nomination was made by a national convention of all the Whigs, several attempts to have it declared by resolution that it must be accepted as a "Whig" nomination, and to declare what the principles of the Whig party were, were voted down. One proposal was to have it declared that Whig principles were "no extension of slavery—no acquisition of foreign territory—protection to American industry, and opposition to executive usurpation." But singularly enough, these propositions were ruled to be out of order: and although the nomination of Millard Fillmore of New York, as Vice President, might seem to give the whole proceeding a Whig aspect, Mr. Fillmore's name, unconnected with any announcement of a distinctive Whig policy, to be upheld in the election, could do nothing more than to acquire for the "ticket" such weight as his personal character, not then very extensively known, could give to it. It was plain enough, therefore, that the election of General Taylor as President, if it should occur, would settle nothing in regard to the very serious questions that were already resulting from the Mexican war.

It was this step on the part of the Whigs—nominating a candidate without any declared policy—that entailed upon that party, at the beginning of General Taylor's administration, the

most embarrassing questions, and increased the danger of the formation of a third party, on the subject of slavery, whose sphere of operations would be confined to the Northern States, and which might, for the first time in our political history, lead to a sectional division between the North and the South.

On the other hand, the Democratic party had to nominate a candidate for the Presidency who, besides being of sufficient consideration throughout the country to counteract the popular *furore* about General Taylor, would represent some distinctive policy in regard to the new territories and the questions growing out of their acquisition. The friends of General Cass, who, although he wore a military title, was not in the category of military heroes, claimed that his party services and public position entitled him to the nomination. Mr. Buchanan was by far the fittest candidate whom the Democrats could have adopted; but he had made it a rule not to press his claims upon the consideration of his party, at the risk of impairing its harmony and efficiency. He had adhered to this rule on more than one previous occasion, and he did not now depart from it. General Cass was nominated by the Democratic Convention, and along with the candidate for the Vice-Presidency, W. O. Butler of Kentucky, he was vigorously supported in the canvass by Mr. Buchanan.\* But the Whig candidates, Taylor and Fillmore, received one hundred and sixty-three electoral votes, being seventeen more than were necessary to a choice. General Taylor was inaugurated as President on the 4th of March, 1849. Although he was a citizen of Louisiana and a slaveholder, he had received the electoral votes of the free States of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Vermont, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. These, with the votes of Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Louisiana,

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\* The "platform" of the Democratic party contained the following resolution: "That Congress has no power, under the Constitution, to interfere with, or control the domestic institutions of the several States; and that such States are the sole and proper judges of everything pertaining to their own affairs, not prohibited by the Constitution; that all efforts, by abolitionists or others, made to induce Congress to interfere with questions of slavery, or to take incipient steps in relation thereto, are calculated to lead to the most alarming and dangerous consequences, and that all such efforts have an inevitable tendency to diminish the happiness of the people and endanger the stability and permanency of the Union, and ought not to be countenanced by any friend to our political institutions." Excepting in an indirect manner, this resolution did not enunciate any specific policy in regard to the newly acquired territories.



and Florida, had elected him. All the other States had been obtained for the Democratic candidates; for although the Northern Whigs who were dissatisfied with such a candidate as General Taylor, and who had begun to call themselves "Conscience Whigs," together with a faction of the Northern Democracy known as "barn-burners" had put in nomination Ex-President Van Buren of New York and Mr. Charles Francis Adams of Massachusetts, this singularly combined party did not obtain the electoral vote of a single State.

While General Taylor, therefore, entered upon the administration of the Government under circumstances which indicated much popular strength, the situation of the country, and his want of the higher qualities of statesmanship and civil experience, were not favorable to his success as a President of the United States. His cabinet, moreover, was not, comparatively speaking, a strong one. The Secretary of State, the Hon. John M. Clayton of Delaware, was scarcely the equal of Mr. Calhoun and Mr. Buchanan, his immediate predecessors; and his negotiation of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty was one of the most unfortunate occurrences in our diplomatic history. The Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Meredith, was simply an accomplished lawyer and a most estimable gentleman. The Attorney-General, the Hon. Reverdy Johnson of Baltimore, was a very eminent advocate in the Supreme Court of the United States, but not a wise and far-seeing statesman. The ablest man in the cabinet, intellectually, was the Hon. Thomas Ewing of Ohio. The other Secretaries were not men of much renown or force. When this administration took charge of the executive department of the Government, a session of Congress was not to commence until December, 1849. At that session, California, which had adopted a State constitution and one that prohibited slavery, demanded admission into the Union as a free State. New Mexico and Utah required the organization of territorial governments. The whole South was in a state of sensitiveness in regard to these matters, and also in regard to the escape of slaves into free territory and to the growing unwillingness of many of the people of the Northern States to have executed that provision of the Constitution which required the surrender of fugitives from service. General Taylor's

policy on these dangerous subjects was not a statesman-like or a practicable one. In his annual message (December, 1849), he recommended the admission of California as a State; but he proposed that the other Territories should be left as they were until they had formed State governments and had applied for admission into the Union. Practically, this would have involved the necessity for governing those regions largely by military power; for the peace must be kept between the inhabitants of Texas and the inhabitants of New Mexico, and between the United States and Texas, in reference to her boundaries. In the opposite sections of the Union popular feeling was rising to a point of great excitement. In the North, the "Wilmot Proviso" was most insisted upon. In the South, this was resented as an indignity. By the end of January, 1850, the angry discussion of these subjects in Congress had obstructed almost all public business, and this excitement pervaded the legislative bodies of the States and the whole press of both sections. It seemed as if harmony and judicious legislation were impossible.

It was at this extraordinary juncture that Mr. Clay came forward in the Senate with his celebrated propositions which became known as the "Compromise Measures of 1850."\* The discussion of these measures went on until the 9th of July (1850), on which day General Taylor died, after a short illness. His policy was characterized by Mr. Webster as marked by the foresight of a soldier, but not by the foresight of a statesman. It was attended with the danger of a collision between the United States and Texas, which might have led to a civil war. Mr. Fillmore, however, who as Vice-President succeeded to General Taylor, and who was sworn into office as President on the 10th of July, was a civilian and was not without experience as a public man, although not hitherto very conspicuous. Mr. Webster, Mr. Clay and Mr. Calhoun† had all strenuously advocated the Compromise Measures. A particular description of this great settlement must be deferred to a future chapter. But in order that these measures might receive their consummation, a reconstruction of the cabinet became necessary. All of the Secretaries appointed by General Taylor resigned. The State

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\* Introduced in the Senate, January 29th, 1850.

† Mr. Calhoun died at Washington on the last day of March, 1850, at the age of 68.

Department was offered to and accepted by Mr. Webster. Thomas Corwin of Ohio became Secretary of the Treasury; Charles M. Conrad of Louisiana, Secretary of War; William A. Graham of North Carolina, Secretary of the Navy; Nathan K. Hall of New York, Postmaster-General; John J. Crittenden of Kentucky, Attorney-General; and Alexander H. H. Stuart of Virginia, Secretary of the Interior. Thus a new Whig administration, pledged to the pacification of the country by a policy very different from that of General Taylor, came into the Executive Department. The Compromise Measures became laws before the adjournment of Congress, which occurred on the 30th of September; and then came the question whether they were to be efficacious in quieting the sectional controversies about slavery, and were to be acquiesced in by the North and the South. Mr. Buchanan, although not in official life, in common with many other patriotic men of both the principal parties, lent all his influence to the support of this great settlement. In November, 1850, he had to address a letter to a public meeting in Philadelphia, called to sustain the Compromise Measures, in which he said :

[LETTER TO A PUBLIC MEETING.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, Nov. 19, 1850.

I now say that the platform of our blessed Union is strong enough and broad enough to sustain all true-hearted Americans. It is an elevated—it is a glorious platform on which the down-trodden nations of the earth gaze with hope and desire, with admiration and astonishment. Our Union is the star of the West, whose genial and steadily increasing influence will at last, should we remain an united people, dispel the gloom of despotism from the ancient nations of the world. Its moral power will prove to be more potent than millions of armed mercenaries. And shall this glorious star set in darkness before it has accomplished half its mission? Heaven forbid! Let us all exclaim with the heroic Jackson, ‘The Union must and shall be preserved.’

And what a Union has this been! The history of the human race presents no parallel to it. The bit of striped bunting which was to be swept from the ocean by a British navy, according to the predictions of a British statesman, previous to the war of 1812, is now displayed on every sea, and in every port of the habitable globe. Our glorious stars and stripes, the flag of our country, now protects Americans in every clime. ‘I am a Roman citizen!’ was once the proud exclamation which everywhere shielded an ancient

Roman from insult and injustice. 'I am an American citizen!' is now an exclamation of almost equal potency throughout the civilized world. This is a tribute due to the power and resources of these thirty-one United States. In a just cause, we may defy the world in arms. We have lately presented a spectacle which has astonished the greatest captain of the age. At the call of their country, an irresistible host of armed men, and men, too, skilled in the use of arms, sprang up like the soldiers of Cadmus, from the mountains and valleys of our confederacy. The struggle among them was not who should remain at home, but who should enjoy the privilege of enduring the dangers and privations of a foreign war, in defence of their country's rights. Heaven forbid that the question of slavery should ever prove to be the stone thrown into their midst by Cadmus, to make them turn their arms against each other, and die in mutual conflict.

The common sufferings and common glories of the past, the prosperity of the present, and the brilliant hopes of the future, must impress every patriotic heart with deep love and devotion for the Union. Who that is now a citizen of this vast Republic, extending from the St. Lawrence to the Rio Grande, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific, does not shudder at the idea of being transformed into a citizen of one of its broken, jealous and hostile fragments? What patriot had not rather shed the last drop of his blood, than see the thirty-one brilliant stars, which now float proudly upon our country's flag, rudely torn from the national banner, and scattered in confusion over the face of the earth?

Rest assured that all the patriotic emotions of every true-hearted Pennsylvanian, in favor of the Union and Constitution, are shared by Southern people. What battle-field has not been illustrated by their gallant deeds; and when in our history have they ever shrunk from sacrifices and sufferings in the cause of their country? What, then, means the muttering thunder which we hear from the South? The signs of the times are truly portentous. Whilst many in the South openly advocate the cause of secession and union, a large majority, as I firmly believe, still fondly cling to the Union, awaiting with deep anxiety the action of the North on the compromise lately effected in Congress. Should this be disregarded and nullified by the citizens of the North, the Southern people may become united, and then farewell, a long farewell, to our blessed Union. I am no alarmist; but a brave and wise man looks danger steadily in the face. This is the best means of avoiding it. I am deeply impressed with the conviction that the North neither sufficiently understands nor appreciates the danger. For my own part, I have been steadily watching its progress for the last fifteen years. During that period I have often sounded the alarm; but my feeble warnings have been disregarded. I now solemnly declare, as the deliberate conviction of my judgment, that two things are necessary to preserve this Union from danger:

- '1. Agitation in the North on the subject of Southern slavery must be rebuked and put down by a strong and enlightened public opinion.

‘2. The Fugitive Slave Law must be enforced in its spirit.’

On each of these points I shall offer a few observations.

Those are greatly mistaken who suppose that the tempest that is now raging in the South has been raised solely by the acts or omissions of the present Congress. The minds of the Southern people have been gradually prepared for this explosion by the events of the last fifteen years. Much and devotedly as they love the Union, many of them are now taught to believe that the peace of their own firesides, and the security of their families, cannot be preserved without separation from us. The crusade of the Abolitionists against their domestic peace and security commenced in 1835. General Jackson, in his annual message to Congress, in December of that year, speaks of it in the following emphatic language: ‘I must also invite your attention to the painful excitement produced in the South by attempts to circulate through the mails inflammatory appeals, addressed to the passions of the slaves, in prints and various sorts of publications, calculated to stimulate them to insurrection, and produce all the horrors of a servile war.’

From that period the agitation in the North against Southern slavery has been incessant, by means of the press, of State Legislatures, of State and County conventions, Abolition lectures, and every other method which fanatics and demagogues could devise. The time of Congress has been wasted in violent harangues on the subject of slavery. Inflammatory appeals have been sent forth from this central point throughout the country, the inevitable effect of which has been to create geographical parties, so much dreaded by the Father of his Country, and to estrange the northern and southern divisions of the Union from each other.

Before the Wilmot proviso was interposed, the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia had been the chief theme of agitation. Petitions for this purpose, by thousands, poured into Congress, session after session. The rights and the wishes of the owners of slaves within the District were boldly disregarded. Slavery was denounced as a national disgrace, which the laws of God and the laws of men ought to abolish, cost what it might. It mattered not to the fanatics that the abolition of slavery in the District would convert it into a citadel, in the midst of two slaveholding States, from which the Abolitionist could securely scatter arrows, firebrands and death all around. It mattered not with them that the abolition of slavery in the District would be a violation of the spirit of the Constitution and of the implied faith pledged to Maryland and Virginia, because the whole world knows that those States would never have ceded it to the Union, had they imagined it could ever be converted by Congress into a place from which their domestic peace and security might be assailed by fanatics and Abolitionists. Nay, the Abolitionists went even still further. They agitated for the purpose of abolishing slavery in the forts, arsenals and navy-yards which the Southern States had ceded to the Union, under the Constitution, for the protection and defence of the country.

Thus stood the question when the Wilmot proviso was interposed, to add fuel to the flame, and to excite the Southern people to madness.

It would be the extreme of dangerous infatuation to suppose that the Union was not then in serious danger. Had the Wilmot proviso become a law, or had slavery been abolished in the District of Columbia, nothing short of a special interposition of Divine Providence could have prevented the secession of most, if not all, the slaveholding States.

It was from this great and glorious old Commonwealth, rightly denominated the 'Keystone of the Arch,' that the first ray of light emanated to dispel the gloom. She stands now as the days-man, between the North and the South, and can lay her hand on either party, and say, thus far shalt thou go, and no farther. The wisdom, moderation and firmness of her people qualify her eminently to act as the just and equitable umpire between the extremes.

It was the vote in our State House of Representatives, refusing to consider the instructing resolution in favor of the Wilmot Proviso, which first cheered the heart of every patriot in the land. This was speedily followed by a vote of the House of Representatives at Washington, nailing the Wilmot Proviso itself to the table. And here I ought not to forget the great meeting held in Philadelphia on the birthday of the Father of his Country, in favor of the Union, which gave a happy and irresistible impulse to public opinion throughout the State, and I may add throughout the Union.

The honor of the South has been saved by the Compromise. The Wilmot Proviso is forever dead, and slavery will never be abolished in the District of Columbia whilst it continues to exist in Maryland. The receding storm in the South still continues to dash with violence, but it will gradually subside, should agitation cease in the North. All that is necessary for us to do 'is to execute the Fugitive Slave Law,' and to let the Southern people alone, suffering them to manage their own domestic concerns in their own way. . . . .

2. I shall proceed to present to you some views upon the subject of the much misrepresented Fugitive Slave Law. It is now evident, from all the signs of the times, that this is destined to become the principal subject of agitation at the present session of Congress, and to take the place of the Wilmot Proviso. Its total repeal or its material modification will henceforward be the battle cry of the agitators of the North.

And what is the character of this law? It was passed to carry into execution a plain, clear, and mandatory provision of the Constitution, requiring that fugitive slaves, who fly from service in one State to another, shall be delivered up to their masters. The provision is so explicit that he who runs may read. No commentary can present it in a stronger light than the plain words of the Constitution. It is a well-known historical fact, that without this provision, the Constitution could never have existed. How could this have been otherwise? Is it possible for a moment to believe that the slave States would have formed a union with the free States, if under it their slaves, by simply escaping across the boundary which separates them, would acquire all the rights of freemen? This would have been to offer an irresistible temptation



to all the slaves of the South to precipitate themselves upon the North. The Federal Constitution, therefore, recognizes in the clearest and most emphatic terms, the property in slaves, and protects this property by prohibiting any State into which a slave might escape, from discharging him from slavery, and by requiring that he shall be delivered up to his master.

The two principal objections urged against the Fugitive Slave law are, that it will promote kidnapping, and that it does not provide a trial by jury for the fugitive in the State to which he has escaped.

The very same reasons may be urged, with equal force, against the act of 1793; and yet it existed for more than half a century without encountering any such objections.

In regard to kidnapping, the fears of the agitators are altogether groundless. The law requires that the fugitive shall be taken before the judge or commissioner. They must there prove, to the satisfaction of the magistrate, the identity of the fugitive, that he is the master's property, and has escaped from his service. Now, I ask, would a kidnapper ever undertake such a task? Would he suborn witnesses to commit perjury, and expose himself to detection before a judge or commissioner, and in the presence of the argus eyes of a non-slaveholding community, whose feelings will always be in favor of the slave? No, never. The kidnapper seizes his victim in the silence of the night, or in a remote and obscure place, and hurries him away. He does not expose himself to the public gaze. He will never bring the unfortunate object of his rapacity before a commissioner or a judge. Indeed, I have no recollection of having heard or read of a case in which a free man was kidnapped under the forms of law, during the whole period of more than half a century, since the act of 1793 was passed.

The Union cannot long endure, if it be bound together only by paper bonds. It can be firmly cemented alone by the affections of the people of the different States for each other. Would to Heaven that the spirit of mutual forbearance and brotherly love which presided at its birth, could once more be restored to bless the land! Upon opening a volume, a few days since, my eye caught a resolution of a Convention of the counties of Maryland, assembled at Annapolis, in June, 1744, in consequence of the passage by the British Parliament of the Boston Port Bill, which provided for opening a subscription 'in the several counties of the Province, for an immediate collection for the relief of the distressed inhabitants of Boston, now cruelly deprived of the means of procuring subsistence for themselves and families by the operation of the said act of blocking up their harbor.' Would that the spirit of fraternal affection which dictated this noble resolution, and which actuated all the conduct of our revolutionary fathers, might return to bless and reanimate the bosoms of their descendants! This would render our Union indissoluble. It would be the living soul infusing itself into the Constitution and inspiring it with irresistible energy."

I select from the letters of Mr. Buchanan to his niece, written in the years 1850, 1851, and 1852, some of those which indicate his constant interest in her, and in their home circle of friends, amid the very busy life which he led even when he was not in any official position:

[TO MISS LANE.]

BEDFORD SPRINGS, August 4, 1850.

MY DEAR HARRIET:—

I received your letter yesterday and was rejoiced to hear from home, especially of Mr. ———'s visit to Miss Hetty, which, I know must have rendered her very happy. I hope he will do better than Mr. ——— or Mr. ———.

I have found Bedford very pleasant, as I always do; but we have very few of the old set, and the new are not equal to them. I will not tell you how many inquiries have been made for you, lest this might make you vainer than you are, which to say the least is unnecessary.

I intend, God willing, to leave here to-morrow morning. Six of us have taken an extra to Chambersburg: Mr. Wilmer and his daughter, Mrs. and Miss Bridges, Mr. Reigart and myself. I shall leave them at Loudon, as I proposed, and hope to be at home on Thursday, Friday, or Saturday next, I know not which.

It was kind in you, and this I appreciate, to say a word to me about Mrs. ———. Should Miss Hetty marry Mr. ———, I shall bring this matter to a speedy conclusion one way or the other. I shall then want a housekeeper, as you would not be fit to superintend: and whose society would be so charming as that of Mrs. ———?

Remember me affectionately to Mrs. Dunham and Miss Hetty, and believe me to be yours "with the highest consideration."

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[TO MISS LANE.]

WHEATLAND, October 12, 1850.

MY DEAR HARRIET:—

Mr. McIlvain of Philadelphia, with whom I had contracted to put up a furnace and kitchen range this week, has disappointed me, and I cannot leave home until this work shall be finished. He writes me that he will certainly commence on Monday morning; and if so, I hope to be in New York the beginning of the week after, say about the 22d instant.

You ask what about your staying at Mrs. Bancroft's. With this I should be very much pleased; but it seems from your letter that she did not ask you to do so. She wished "to see a great deal" of you when you came to New

York, implying that you were not to stay with her all the time. If she has since given you an invitation, accept it.

Could I have anticipated that you would not pass some time at Governor Marcy's, I should have arranged this matter by writing to Mrs. Bancroft. It is now too late.

I may probably pass a few days at the Astor House in New York; but I may have to see so many politicians, that I should have but little time to devote to you. I desire very much to reach New York before the departure of Mr. Slidell which will be on the 26th instant.

I shall be very glad, if Clementina Pleasanton should accompany you home, though the leaves are beginning to change color and to fall.

. . . . .  
 . . . . .  
 . . . . .

Professor Muhlenbergh, having been appointed a professor in Pennsylvania College (Gettysburg), has ceased to teach school, and James Henry left for Princeton on Thursday last.

We have no local news, at least I know of none, that would interest you. I think we shall have very agreeable neighbors in the Gonders at Abbeville. Please to remember me very kindly to Mr. and Mrs. Robinson and give my love to Rose.

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[TO MISS LANE.]

WHEATLAND, January 17, 1851.

MY DEAR HARRIET:—

I have received yours of the 15th, and we are all happy to learn that you have reached Washington so pleasantly. I hope that your visit may prove agreeable; and that you may return home self-satisfied with all that may transpire during your absence. Keep your eyes about you in the gay scenes through which you are destined to pass, and take care to do nothing and say nothing of which you may have cause to repent. Above all be on your guard against flattery; and should you receive it, "let it pass into one ear gracefully and out at the other." Many a clever girl has been spoiled for the useful purposes of life, and rendered unhappy by a winter's gaiety in Washington. I know, however, that Mrs. Pleasanton will take good care of you and prevent you from running into any extravagance. Still it is necessary that, with the blessing of Providence, you should take care of yourself.

I attended the festival in Philadelphia, on the occasion of the arrival of the steamer "City of Glasgow," but did not see Lilly Macalester. Her father

thinks of taking her to the World's Fair in London. I saw Mrs. Plitt for a moment, who inquired kindly after you.

We are moving on here in the old way, and I have no news of any interest to communicate to you. Eskridge was out here last night, and said they were all well in town. I met Mrs. Baker yesterday on the street with her inseparable companion. She was looking very well.

I have not yet determined whether I shall visit Washington during the present session; but it is probable that I may, on or about the first of February.

Give my love to Laura and Clementina, and remember me in the kindest terms to Mr. and Mrs. Pleasanton.

Miss Hetty and James desire their love to you.

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[TO MISS LANE.]

WHEATLAND near LANCASTER, April 7, 1851.

MY DEAR HARRIET:—

Supposing that you are now in Baltimore, I send you the enclosed letter received yesterday. It was inadvertently opened by me; but the moment I saw it was addressed to "My dear Harriet" it was closed. It may contain love or treason for aught I know.

Eskridge was here yesterday; but he gave me no news, except that Mary and he were at a party at Mr. McElrath's on Wednesday evening last.

The place now begins to look beautiful, and we have concerts of the birds every morning. Still I fear it will appear dull to you after your winter's gaiety. Lewis has gone, and we have a new coachman in the person of Mr. Francis Quinn, who with his lady occupy the gardener's house. They have no children. Mr. C. Reigart will leave here on Saturday next for the World's Fair and a trip to the continent. Your *ci-devant* lover, Mr. ———, purposes to go likewise; but many persons think he will not get off on account of the expense. Mr. and Mrs. Gonder prove to be very agreeable neighbors. They are furnishing their house and fitting up their grounds with much taste and at considerable expense.

With my kindest regards for Mr. and Mrs. White and the young ladies, I remain,

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[TO MISS LANE.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, Nov. 4, 1851.

MY DEAR HARRIET:—

I have received your favor of the 29th ultimo, and would have answered it sooner had I not been absent at Lebanon on its arrival. You appear to

have already got under full sail in Pittsburgh, and I hope your voyage throughout may be prosperous and happy. If you have found the place even blacker and dirtier than you anticipated, you will find the people warm-hearted, generous, kind and agreeable. But do not for a moment believe that any hearts will be broken, even if you should fail to pay all the visits to families where you are invited. I know, however, that you are not so romantic a girl as to take for gospel all the pretty things which may be said to you.

My dinner to the bride and groom is to come off next Saturday, and I intend to call upon Mrs. Baker to be mistress of ceremonies. I had to send for her on Friday last to stay with Mr. and Mrs. Yost, whom I was compelled to leave, by an engagement to be present at a Jubilee at Lebanon.

Eskridge was here on Sunday, but brought no budget of news. Indeed, I believe, there is nothing stirring which would interest you.

I have a friend in Pittsburgh, such as few men ever had, by name Major David Lynch. He does not move in the first circle of fashionable society, but he exercises more influence than any other Democrat in that region. His devotion to me is unexampled. With one such man there would be no difficulty in Lancaster county. I know that Dr. Speer don't like him; but when you visit Mrs. Collins, get Mr. McCandless to request him to pay you a visit and treat him with the utmost kindness. His wife is a lady of fine sense; but I presume you will not be asked to visit her. If you should, make it a point to go.

Miss Hetty and myself are now alone, although I have many calls. For the last two days, and a great part of the night I have been constantly at work in answering the letters which have accumulated during my absence at New York, the Harrisburg Fair and Lebanon.

Miss Hetty desires to be kindly remembered to you. Take care of yourself. Be prudent and discreet among strangers. I hope you will not remove the favorable impression you have made. Please to present my kindest regards to Dr. and Mrs. Speer, Miss Lydia and the family, and believe me to be,

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

P. S.—If I believed it necessary, I would advise you to be constant in your devotions to your God. He is a friend who will never desert you. Men are short-sighted and know not the consequences of their own actions. The most brilliant prospects are often overcast; and those who commence life under the fairest auspices, are often unfortunate. Ask wisdom and discretion from above. ———, and ———, and ——— married unfortunately. I should like nothing better than to see you well settled in life; but never think of marrying any man unless his moral habits are good, and his business or his fortune will enable him to support you comfortably. So now my postscript is like a woman's; the best the last.

[TO MISS LANE.]

Saturday Morning, Nov. 8, 1851.

MY DEAR HARRIET:—

Our excellent friend and neighbor, Mr. Gonder, died this morning, and this event has covered us with gloom. Of course there will be no dinner party to-day. We are all well and going on as usual.

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[TO MISS LANE.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, Dec. 12, 1851.

MY DEAR HARRIET:—

I have received your letter of the 6th instant, and am happy to learn you are still enjoying yourself at Pittsburgh. I have not any news of interest to communicate, unless it be that Mary and Kate Reynolds went to Philadelphia on Wednesday last, and James Henry is to be at home next week. At Wheatland we are all moving on in the old way. My correspondence is now so heavy as to occupy my whole time from early morning until late at night, except when visitors are with me.

I still continue to be of the same opinion I was concerning the Presidency; *but this is for yourself alone.*

My life is now one of great labor, but I am philosopher enough not to be very anxious.

With my kindest regards for Mrs. Collins and Sis,

I remain yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[TO MISS LANE.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, Feb. 24, 1852.

MY DEAR HARRIET:—

On my return home from Richmond and Washington, on the day before yesterday, I received yours of the 9th instant. I am truly grateful that you have enjoyed your visit to Pittsburgh so much. I have no desire that you shall return home until it suits your own inclination. All I apprehend is that you may wear out your welcome. It will be impossible for me to visit Pittsburgh and escort you home.

Senator Gwin misinformed me as to the value of Mr. Baker's office. The salary attached to it is \$4000 per annum. He thinks that Mrs. Baker ought by all means to go to California. I have not seen Eskridge since my return.

I took Miss —— to Washington and left her there, and am truly glad to be clear of her.

Whilst in Washington I saw very little of the fashionable society. My time was almost constantly occupied with the politicians. Still I partook of a family dinner with the Pleasantons, who all desired to be kindly remembered to you. I never saw Clementina looking better than she does, and they all appear to be cheerful. Still when an allusion was made to her mother, she was overcome at the table and had to leave it. Mr. Pleasanton is evidently in very delicate health, though he goes to his office.

I called to see Mrs. Walker, who inquired very kindly for you, and so did Col. King and others.

The mass of letters before me is "prodigious," and I only write to show that you are not forgotten.

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[TO MISS LANE.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, March 13, 1852.

MY DEAR HARRIET:—

I have received yours of the 9th instant. It was difficult to persuade you to visit Pittsburgh, but it seems to be still more difficult for you to leave it. I am, however, not disappointed in this particular, because I know the kindness and hospitality of the people. There is not a better or more true-hearted man alive than John Anderson, and his excellent wife well deserves such a husband. Make out your visit, which, it is evident, you propose to continue until the middle of April; but after your return I hope you will be content to remain at home during the summer. The birds are now singing around the house, and we are enjoying the luxury of a fine day in the opening spring.

Miss Hetty has just informed me that Mrs. Lane gave birth to a son a few days ago, which they call John N. Lane. She heard it this morning at market from Eskridge, whom I have not seen since last Sunday week. I hope he will be here to-morrow.

The new Court House is to be erected on Newton Lightner's corner. Its location has caused much excitement in Lancaster. It enables your sweetheart, Mr. Evans, Mr. Lightner and Mr. —— to sell their property to advantage. We have no other news.

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

P. S.—Miss Harriet Lane to me; but Miss *Harriette* to the rest of man and womankind.

[TO MISS LANE.]

SARATOGA SPRINGS, August 8, 1852.

MY DEAR HARRIET:—

I arrived at this place on Thursday evening last, and now on Sunday morning before church am addressing you this note . . . . . I find the Springs very agreeable and the company very pleasant, yet there does not appear to be so many of the "dashers" here as I have seen. The crowd is very great, in fact it is quite a mob of fashionable folks. Mrs. Plitt is very agreeable and quite popular. Mrs. Slidell is the most gay, brilliant and fashionable lady at the Springs; and as I am her admirer, and attached to her party, I am thus rendered a little more conspicuous in the *beau monde* than I could desire. Mrs. Rush conducts herself very much like a lady, and is quite popular. She has invited me to accompany her to Albini's concert to-morrow evening, and I would rather go with her to any other place. Albini is all the rage here. I have seen and conversed with her, and am rather impressed in her favor. She is short and thick, but has a very good, arch and benevolent countenance. I shall, however, soon get tired of this place, and do not expect to remain here longer than next Thursday. Not having heard from you, I should have felt somewhat uneasy, had Mary not written to Mrs. Plitt. I expect to be at home in two weeks from the time I started. Mrs. Plitt desires me to send her love to you, Mrs. Baker and Miss Hetty. Remember me affectionately to Mrs. Baker, Miss Hetty and James Henry, and believe me to be

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

Numerous public letters written by Mr. Buchanan in these years, 1851 and 1852, find their appropriate place here. They exhibit fully all his sentiments and opinions on the topics which then agitated the country.

[TO COL. GEORGE R. FALL.\*]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, Dec. 24th, 1851.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I am sorry I did not receive your letter sooner. I might then have given it the "old-fashioned Democratic" answer which you desire. But I am compelled to leave home immediately; and if I should not write at the present moment, it will be too late for the 8th of January Convention. I must therefore be brief.

My public life is before the country, and it is my pride never to have

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\* From the *Mississippian* of January 9, 1852.



evaded an important political question. The course of Democracy is always straight ahead, and public men who determine to pursue it never involve themselves in labyrinths, except when they turn to the right or the left from the plain forward path. Madison's Report and Jefferson's Kentucky Resolutions are the safest and surest guides to conduct a Democratic administration of the Federal Government. It is the true mission of Democracy to resist centralism and the absorption of unconstitutional powers by the President and Congress. The sovereignty of the States and a devotion to their reserved rights can alone preserve and perpetuate our happy system of Government. The exercise of doubtful and constructive powers on the part of Congress has produced all the dangerous and exciting questions which have imperilled the Union. The Federal Government, even confined within its strict constitutional limits, must necessarily acquire more and more influence through the increased and increasing expenditure of public money, and hence the greater necessity for public economy and watchful vigilance. Our Constitution, when it proceeded from the hands of its framers, was a simple system; and the more free from complexity it remains, the more powerfully, satisfactorily and beneficially will it operate within its legitimate sphere.

It is centralization alone which has prevented the French people from establishing a permanent republican government, and entailed upon them so many misfortunes. Had the provinces of France been converted into separate territorial provinces, like our State governments, Paris would then no longer have been France, and a revolution at the capital would not have destroyed the Federative Republic.

Had the principles I have enumerated been observed by the Federal Government and by the people of the several States, we should have avoided the alarming questions which have arisen out of the institution of domestic slavery. The people of each State would then, to employ a homely but expressive phrase, have attended to their own business and not have interfered in the domestic concerns of their sister States. But on this important subject I have so fully presented my views in the enclosed letter to the great meeting in Philadelphia, held in November, 1850, that it would be useless to repeat them, even if time would permit.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[TO THE CENTRAL SOUTHERN RIGHTS ASSOCIATION OF VIRGINIA.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, April 10, 1851.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your kind letter of the 2d inst., with the resolutions adopted by the Central Southern Rights Association of Virginia, inviting me to address the Association at such time as may suit my convenience, and to counsel with them "in regard to the best means to be adopted in the present alarming crisis, for the maintenance of the Constitution and the Union of these States in their original purity."

I should esteem it both a high honor and a great privilege to comply with this request, and therefore regret to say, that engagements, which I need not specify, render it impossible for me to visit Richmond during the present, or probably the next month.

The Association do me no more than justice, when attributing to me a strong desire "for the maintenance of the Constitution, and the Union of the States in their original purity."

Whilst few men in this country would venture to avow a different sentiment, yet the question still remains, by what means can this all-important purpose be accomplished? I feel no hesitation in answering, by returning to the old Virginia platform of State rights, prescribed by the resolutions of 1798, and Mr. Madison's report. The powers conferred by the Constitution upon the General Government, must be construed strictly, and Congress must abstain from the exercise of all doubtful powers. But it is said these are mere unmeaning abstractions—and so they are, unless honestly carried into practice. Like the Christian faith, however, when it is genuine, good results will inevitably flow from a sincere belief in such a strict construction of the Constitution.

Were this old republican principle adopted in practice, we should no longer witness unwarrantable and dangerous attempts in Congress to interfere with the institution of domestic slavery, which belongs exclusively to the States where it exists—there would be no efforts to establish high protective tariffs—the public money would not be squandered upon a general system of internal improvements—general in name, but particular in its very nature, and corrupting in its tendency, both to the Government and to the people; and we would retrench our present extravagant expenditure, pay our national debt, and return to the practice of a wise economy, so essential to public and private prosperity. Were I permitted to address your Association, these are the counsels I should give, and some of the topics I should discuss, as the best means "for the maintenance both of the Constitution and the Union of the States, in their original purity," and for the perpetuation of our great and glorious confederacy.

With sentiments of high regard, I remain yours, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[TO SHELTON F. LEAKE, ESQ., AND OTHER GENTLEMEN.\*]

RICHMOND, February 12, 1852.

GENTLEMEN :—

On my arrival in this city last evening I received your very kind letter, welcoming me to the metropolis of the Old Dominion and tendering me the honor of a public dinner. I regret—deeply regret—that my visit to Richmond will necessarily be so brief that I cannot enjoy the pleasure and the privilege of meeting you all at the festive board. Intending merely to pass a day with

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\* From the *Lancaster Intelligencer*, February 24, 1852.

my valued friend, Judge Mason, my previous arrangements are of such a character that I must leave here to-morrow, or, at the latest, on Saturday morning.

But whilst I cannot accept the dinner, I shall ever esteem the invitation from so many of Virginia's most distinguished and estimable sons as one of the proudest honors of my life. Your ancient and renowned commonwealth has ever been the peculiar guardian of State rights and the firm supporter of constitutional liberty, of law, and of order. When, therefore, she endorses with her approbation any of my poor efforts to serve the country, her commendation is a sure guarantee that these have been devoted to a righteous cause.

You are pleased to refer in favorable terms to my recent conduct "at home in defence of the Federal Constitution and laws." This was an easy and agreeable task, because the people of Pennsylvania have ever been as loyal and faithful to the Constitution, the Union, the rights of the sovereign States of which it is composed, as the people of the ancient Dominion themselves. To have pursued a different course in my native State would therefore, have been to resist the strong current of enlightened public opinion.

I purposely refrain from discussing the original merit of the Compromise, because I consider it, to employ the expressive language of the day, as a "finality"—a fixed fact—a most important enactment of law, the agitation or disturbance of which could do no possible good, but might produce much positive evil. Our noble vessel of State, freighted with the hope of mankind, both for the present and future generations, has passed through the most dangerous breakers which she has ever encountered, and has triumphantly ridden out the storm. Both those who supported the measures of the Compromise as just and necessary, and those who, regarding them in a different light, yet acquiesce in them for the sake of the Union, have arrived at the same conclusion—that it must and shall be executed. They have thus, for every practical purpose, adopted the same platform, and have resolved to sustain it against the common enemy.—Why, then, should they wrangle, and divide and waste their energies, not respecting the main question, which has already been definitely settled, but in regard to the process which has brought them, though from different directions, to the same conclusion? Above all, why should the strength of the Democratic party of the country be impaired and its ascendancy be jeopardized for any such cause? We who believe that the triumph of Democratic principles is essential not only to the prosperity of the Union, but even to the preservation of the Constitution, ought reciprocally to forget, and, if need be, to forgive the past, and cordially unite with our political brethren in sustaining for the future the good old cause of Democracy. It must be a source of deep and lasting pleasure to every patriotic heart that our beloved country has so happily passed through the late trying and dangerous crisis. The volcano has been extinguished, I trust, forever; and the man who would apply a firebrand, at the present moment, to the combustible

materials which still remain, may produce an eruption to overwhelm both the Constitution and the Union.

With sentiments of high and grateful respect,

I remain your fellow citizen,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[TO JOHN NELSON, WM. F. GILES, JOHN O. WHARTON, JOHN MORRIS, CARROLL SPENCE,  
AND OTHER CITIZENS OF BALTIMORE.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, February 3, 1852.

GENTLEMEN:—

In returning home through your city on Saturday last, I had the unexpected honor of receiving your kind invitation to partake of a public dinner at such time as might best suit my own convenience. For this distinguished and valuable token of your regard, please to accept my most grateful acknowledgments; and, whilst regretting that circumstances, which it would be too tedious to explain, will deprive me of the pleasure of meeting you at the festive board, you may rest assured that I shall ever highly prize the favorable opinion you express of my poor public services.

To the city of Baltimore I have ever been attached by strong ties. In early life I had selected it as the place where to practice my profession; and nothing prevented me from carrying this purpose into effect but my invincible reluctance, at the last moment, to leave my native State. The feeling which prompted me in 1814, during the last war with Great Britain, to march as a private to Baltimore, a circumstance to which you kindly allude, resulted from a patriotism so universal throughout Pennsylvania, that the honor which may fall to the lot of any one of the thousands of my fellow-citizens who volunteered their services on that trying occasion, scarcely deserves to be mentioned.

If I rightly read "the signs of the times," there has seldom been a period when the Democratic party of the country, to which you and I are warmly attached, was in greater danger of suffering a defeat than at the present moment. In order to avert this catastrophe, we must mutually forget and forgive past dissensions, suffer "by-gones to be by-gones," and commence a new career, keeping constantly in view the ancient and long established landmarks of the party. Most, if not all the great questions of policy which formerly divided us from our political opponents, have been settled in our favor. No person, at this day, thinks of re-establishing another national bank, or repealing the Independent Treasury, or distributing the proceeds of the public lands among the several States, or abolishing the veto power. On these great and important questions, the Whigs, after a long and violent struggle, have yielded: and, for the present, at least, would seem to stand upon the Democratic platform. The compromise measures are now a "finality"—those who opposed them honestly and powerfully, and who still believe them

to be wrong, having patriotically determined to acquiesce in them for the sake of the Union, provided they shall be faithfully carried into execution.

On what issues, then, can we go before the country and confidently calculate upon the support of the American people at the approaching Presidential election? I answer unhesitatingly that we must fall back, as you suggest, upon those fundamental and time-honored principles which have divided us from our political opponents since the beginning, and which from the very nature of the Federal Constitution, must continue to divide us from them until the end. We must inscribe upon our banners a sacred regard for the reserved rights of the States—a strict construction of the Constitution—a denial to Congress of all powers not clearly granted by that instrument, and a rigid economy in public expenditures.

These expenditures have now reached the enormous sum of fifty millions of dollars per annum, and, unless arrested in their advance by the strong arm of the Democracy of the country, may, in the course of a few years, reach one hundred millions. The appropriation of money to accomplish great national objects sanctioned by the Constitution, ought to be on a scale commensurate with our power and resources as a nation—but its expenditure ought to be conducted under the guidance of enlightened economy and strict responsibility. I am convinced that our expenses might be considerably reduced below the present standard, not only without detriment, but with positive advantage both to the government and the people.

An excessive and lavish expenditure of public money, though in itself highly pernicious, is as nothing when compared with the disastrous influence it may exert upon the character of our free institutions. A strong tendency towards extravagance is the great political evil of the present day; and this ought to be firmly resisted. Congress is now incessantly importuned from every quarter to make appropriations for all sorts of projects. Money, money from the National Treasury is constantly demanded to enrich contractors, speculators, and agents; and these projects are gilded over with every allurements which can be imparted to them by ingenuity and talent. Claims which had been condemned by former decisions and had become rusty with age have been again revived, and have been paid, principal and interest. Indeed there seems to be one general rush to obtain money from the Treasury on any and every pretence.

What will be the inevitable consequence of such lavish expenditures? Are they not calculated to disturb the nicely adjusted balance between the Federal and State Governments, upon the preservation of which depend the harmony and efficiency of our system? Greedy expectants from the Federal Treasury will regard with indifference, if not with contempt, the governments of the several States. The doctrine of State rights will be laughed to scorn by such individuals, as an obsolete abstraction unworthy of the enlightened spirit of the age. The corrupting power of money will be felt throughout the length and breadth of this land; and the Democracy, led on by the hero and sage of the Hermitage, will have in vain put down the Bank of the United States,

if the same fatal influence for which it was condemned, shall be exerted and fostered by means drawn from the Public Treasury.

To be liberal with their own money but sparing of that of the Republic was the glory of distinguished public servants among the ancient Romans. When this maxim was reversed, and the public money was employed by artful and ambitious demagogues to secure their own aggrandizement, genuine liberty soon expired. It is true that the forms of the Republic continued for many years; but the animating and inspiring soul had fled forever. I entertain no serious apprehensions that we shall ever reach this point, yet we may still profit by their example.

With sentiments of the highest respect, I remain your friend and fellow-citizen,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

To these should be added an address made at a festival in Philadelphia on the 11th of January, 1851, on the establishment of a line of steamships between that city and Liverpool. The account is taken from the journals of the time.

After Governor Johnston had concluded, Morton McMichael came forward, and said that he had been instructed by the Committee of Arrangements to propose the health of an eminent Pennsylvanian who was then present—one who had represented his State in the National legislative councils, and had occupied a chief place in the administration of the National Government, and in regard to whom, however political differences might exist, all agreed that his high talents, his unsullied integrity, and his distinguished public services had justly placed him in the foremost rank, not only of Pennsylvanians, but of all Americans. He therefore gave

The health of the Hon. James Buchanan.

When Mr. Buchanan rose to reply, there was a whirlwind of cheers and applause. In the midst of it the band struck up a favorite and complimentary air, at the end of which the cheering was renewed, and several minutes elapsed before he could be heard.

Mr. Buchanan, after making his acknowledgments to the company for the kind manner in which he had been received, proceeded to speak as follows:—

What a spectacle does this meeting present! It must be a source of pride and gratification to every true-hearted Pennsylvanian. Here are assembled the executive and legislative authorities of the commonwealth, several members from the State to the present Congress, as well as those elected to the next, and the Board of Canal Commissioners, enjoying the magnificent hospitality of the city and the incorporated districts adjacent—all of which, in fact, constitute but one great city of Philadelphia.

What important event in the history of Philadelphia is this meeting intended to celebrate? Not a victory achieved by our arms over a foreign foe.

Not the advent amongst us of a great military captain fresh from the bloody fields of his glory; but the arrival here of a peaceful commercial steamer from the other side of the Atlantic. This welcome stranger is destined, as we all trust, to be the harbinger of a rapidly increasing foreign trade between our own city and the great commercial city of Liverpool. All hail to Captain Matthews and his gallant crew! Peace, as well as war, has its triumphs; and these, although they may not be so brilliant, are far more enduring and useful to mankind.

The establishment of a regular line of steamers between these two ports will prove of vast importance both to the city of Philadelphia and the State at large. And here, let me observe, that the interests of the city and the State are identical—inseparable. Like man and wife, when a well-assorted couple, they are mutually dependent. The welfare and prosperity of the one are the welfare and prosperity of the other. "Those whom Heaven has joined together, let not man put asunder." If any jealousies, founded or unfounded, have heretofore existed between them, let them be banished from this day forward and forever. Let them be in the "deep bosom of the ocean buried."

The great Central Railroad will furnish the means of frequent and rapid intercommunication between the city and the State. In the course of another year, Philadelphia will be brought within twelve or fourteen hours of our Great Iron City of the West—a city of as much energy and enterprise for the number of inhabitants, as any on the face of the earth; and, I might add, of as warm and generous hospitality. I invite you all, in the name of the people of the interior, to visit us oftener than you have done heretofore. You shall receive a hearty welcome. Let us become better acquainted, and we shall esteem each other more.

But will this great undertaking to extend the foreign commerce of Philadelphia with Europe, by means of regular lines of steamers, prove successful? To doubt this is to doubt whether the capital, intelligence, and perseverance, which have assured signal success to Philadelphia in every other industrial pursuit, shall fail when applied to steam navigation on the ocean. But after to-night there can be "no such word as fail" in our vocabulary. We have put our hand to the plough, and we must go ahead. We dare not, because we cannot, look back without disgrace; whilst success in foreign commerce will be the capsheaf—the crowning glory of Philadelphia.

The distance of Philadelphia from the ocean, and the consequent length of river navigation, have hitherto constituted an obstacle to her success in foreign trade. Thanks to the genius of Fulton, this obstacle has been removed, and the noble Delaware, for every purpose of foreign commerce, is as if it were an arm of the sea. We learn from the highest authority, that of the pioneer who was an officer in one of the first steamers which ever crossed the Atlantic, and who has successfully completed his ninety-ninth voyage, that the difference in time from Liverpool between New York and Philadelphia is only about twenty hours. This is comparatively of no importance, and cannot have the slightest effect on the success of the enterprise.

Fulton was a native citizen of Pennsylvania. He was born in the county where I reside. And shall not the metropolis of the native State of that extraordinary man who, first of the human race, successfully applied steam power to navigation, enjoy the benefits of this momentous discovery which has changed the whole face of the civilized world? Philadelphia, in her future career, will gloriously answer this question.

Philadelphia enjoys many advantages for the successful pursuit of foreign commerce. Her population now exceeds 400,000; and it is a population of which we may be justly proud. It is of no mushroom growth; but has advanced steadily onward. Her immense capital is the result of long years of successful industry and enterprise. Strength and durability characterize all her undertakings. She has already achieved distinguished success in manufactures, in the mechanic arts, in domestic commerce, and in every other industrial pursuit, and in the natural progress of events, she has now determined to devote her energies to foreign commerce.

And where is there a city in the world, whose ship-yards produce finer vessels? Whether for beauty of model, rapidity of sailing, or durability, Philadelphia built vessels have long enjoyed the highest character. Long as I have been in the public councils, I have never known a vessel of war built in this city, not fully equal to any of her class afloat on the waters of the world. A few weeks since I had the pleasure of examining the steamer *Susquehanna*, and I venture to say, that a nobler vessel can nowhere be found. She will bear the stars and the stripes triumphantly amid the battle and the breeze. May we not hope that Philadelphia steamers will, ere long, be found bearing her trade and her name on every sea, and into every great commercial port on the face of this earth?

The vast resources of the State which will be poured into the lap of Philadelphia, will furnish the materials of an extensive foreign commerce. And here, in the presence of this domestic family Pennsylvania circle, may we not indulge in a little self-gratulation, and may we not be pardoned, if nobody else will praise us, for praising ourselves. We have every reason to be proud of our State; and perhaps we ought to cherish a little more State pride than we possess. This, when not carried to excess, when it scorns to depreciate a rival, is a noble and useful principle of action. It is the parent of generous emulation in the pursuit of all that is excellent, all that is calculated to adorn and bless mankind. It enkindles the desire in us to stand as high as the highest among our sister States, in the councils of our country, in the pursuit of agriculture and manufactures and every useful art. This honorable feeling of State pride, particularly when the Pennsylvanian is abroad, out of his native land, will make his heart swell with exultation, if he finds that Philadelphia has become a great commercial city, her flag waving over every sea, her steamers to be seen in every port—an elevated position in which Philadelphia, if she but wills it, can undoubtedly be placed.

The great and good founder of our State, whose precept and whose practice was "peace on earth, and good will to man," immediately after he had



obtained the royal charter, in the spirit of prophetic enthusiasm declared, "God will bless, and make it the seed of a nation. I shall have a tender care of the government that it be well laid at first."

How gloriously this prediction has been verified! God has blessed it, and the seed which the founder sowed has borne the richest fruit. We are indeed a nation, confederated with thirty other sovereign nations or States by the most sacred political instrument in the annals of mankind, called the Constitution of the United States. Besides, we are truly the keystone of this vast confederacy, and our character and position eminently qualify us to act as a mediator between opposing extremes. Placed in the centre, between the North and the South, with a population distinguished for patriotism and steady good sense, and a devoted love to the Union, we stand as the days man, between the extremes, and can declare with the voice of power to both, hitherto shalt thou go, and no further. May this Union endure forever, the source of innumerable blessings to those who live under its beneficent sway, and the star of hope to millions of down-trodden men throughout the world!

Bigotry has never sacrificed its victims at the shrine of intolerance in this our favored State. When they were burning witches in Massachusetts, honestly believing at the time they were doing God's service, William Penn, in 1684, presided at the trial of a witch. Under his direction, the verdict was: "The prisoner is guilty of the common fame of being a witch; but not guilty as she stands indicted." And "in Penn's domain, from that day to this," says the gifted historian, "neither demon nor hag ever rode through the air on goat or broomstick."

From the first settlement of the province until the present moment, the freedom of conscience established by the founder, has been perfect. Religion has always been a question exclusively between man and his Creator, and every human being has been free to worship his Maker according to the dictates of his own conscience.

Bigotry, madly assuming to itself an attribute belonging to the Almighty, has never attempted to punish any one of his creatures for not adapting his belief to its own standard of faith. We have great cause to be proud of the early history of Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania, more than any other State of the Union, has been settled by emigrants from all the European nations. Our population now exceeds two millions and a quarter; but we cannot say that it is composed of the pure Anglo-Saxon race. The English, the Germans, the Scotch Irish, the Irish, the Welsh, the French, and emigrants from every other European country have all intermingled upon our happy soil. We are truly a mixed race. And is not this a cause for self-gratulation? Providence, as if to designate his will that families and nations should cultivate extended intercourse with each other, has decreed that intermarriage in the same family shall eventually produce a miserable and puny race, both in body and in mind; whilst intermarriages among entire strangers have been signally blessed. May it then not be

probable that the intermixture of the natives of the different nations is calculated to produce a race superior to any one of the elements of which it is composed. Let us hope that we possess the good qualities of all, without a large share of the evil qualities of either. Certain it is that in Pennsylvania we can boast of a population which for energy, for patient industry, and for strict morality, are unsurpassed by the people of any other country.

And what is her condition at present? Heaven has blessed us with a climate which, notwithstanding its variations, is equal to almost any other on the face of the earth, and a soil capable of furnishing all the agricultural products of the temperate zone. And how have we improved these advantages? In agriculture we have excelled. I have myself been over a good portion of the best cultivated parts of the world; but never anywhere, in any country, have I witnessed such evidences of real substantial comfort and prosperity, such farm-houses and barns, as are to be found in Pennsylvania. It is true we cannot boast of baronial castles, and of extensive parks and pleasure grounds, and of all the other appendages of wealth and aristocracy which beautify and adorn the scenery of other countries. These can only exist in countries where the soil is monopolized by wealthy proprietors and where the farms are consequently occupied by a dependent tenantry. Thank Heaven! in this country, every man of industry and economy, with the blessings of Providence upon his honest labor, can acquire a freehold for himself, and sit under his own vine and his own fig tree, and there shall be none to make him afraid.

Then in regard to our mineral wealth. We have vast masses of coal and iron scattered with a profuse hand under the surface of our soil. These are far more valuable than the golden sands and golden ore of California. The patient labor necessary to extract these treasures from the earth, and bring them to market, strengthens the sinews of the laborer, makes him self-reliant and dependent upon his own exertions, infuses courage into the heart, and produces a race capable of maintaining their liberties at home and of defending their country against any and every foreign foe. Look at your neighboring town of Richmond. There three millions of tons of coal are annually brought to market, and the domestic tonnage employed for sending it abroad exceeds the whole foreign tonnage of the city of New York. All these vast productions of our agriculture and our mines are the natural aliments of foreign commerce for the city of Philadelphia.

But this is not all. Our Central Railroad will soon be completed; and when this is finished, it will furnish the avenue by which the productions of the great West will seek a market in Philadelphia. It will connect with a chain of numerous other railroads, penetrating the vast valley of the Mississippi in different directions, which will bring the productions of that extended region to seek a market in Philadelphia.

And with these unexampled materials for foreign commerce, is it possible that the city of Philadelphia will hold back? Will she not employ her capital in a vigorous effort to turn to her own advantage all these elements of

wealth which Providence has placed within her reach? What is the smallest share of foreign commerce to which she is legitimately entitled? It is at least to import into Philadelphia all the foreign goods necessary for the supply of Pennsylvania and the far West, which seek her markets for their productions. She is bound, by every principle of interest and duty, to bring to her own wharves this amount of foreign trade, and never as a Pennsylvanian shall I rest satisfied until she shall have attained this measure of success. Shall she then tamely look on and suffer her great rival city, of which every American ought to be proud, to monopolize the profit and advantages to which she is justly and fairly entitled? Shall New York continue to be the importing city for Philadelphia? Shall she any longer be taunted with the imputation that so far as foreign trade is concerned, she is a mere provincial and dependent city? She can, if she but energetically wills it, change this course of trade so disadvantageous to her character and her interests; and the proceedings of this meeting afford abundant assurances that from this day forth she is destined to enter upon a new and glorious career. She must be prepared to encounter and to overcome serious competition. She must therefore nerve her arm for the struggle. The struggle is worthy of her most determined efforts.

## II.—3

## CHAPTER II.

1852.

THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATIONS OF 1852—ELECTION OF GENERAL FRANKLIN PIERCE TO THE PRESIDENCY—BUCHANAN'S COURSE IN REGARD TO THE NOMINATION AND THE ELECTION—HIS EFFORTS TO DEFEAT THE WHIG CANDIDATE.

IN arraying themselves for the Presidential election of 1852, the Democratic and the Whig parties might have had an equal or a nearly equal reason to look for success, if they had been equally consistent with their professed principles on the subject of the compromise measures of 1850. But while the Democrats, both by their "platform" and their candidate, gave the people of the country reason to believe that the great national settlement of 1850 was to be adhered to, the Whigs, although promising as much by their "platform," did not, in the person of their candidate and his apparent political connections, afford the same grounds of confidence. The nominating convention of the Democrats was the first to be held. It assembled at Baltimore on the 1st of June, 1852. Mr. Buchanan was one of the principal candidates for the nomination, but it soon became apparent that neither he, General Cass, Mr. Douglas, Mr. Dickinson, Governor Marcy, or any other of the more prominent leaders of the party would receive it. The candidate finally agreed upon was General Franklin Pierce of New Hampshire, a younger man than most of the others. He had been a Senator in Congress from that State for five years preceding 1842, and had served with spirit in the Mexican war as a Brigadier General of Volunteers. As a candidate for the Presidency, he represented in the fullest and most unqualified manner the resolution adopted by the convention as a part of its "platform," and which pledged him and his party to "resist

all attempts at renewing in Congress, or out of it, the agitation of the slavery question, under whatever shape or color the attempt may be made."

On the other hand, the Whig convention, which assembled at Baltimore on the 16th of June, nominated General Winfield Scott, to the exclusion of Mr. Webster and President Fillmore, after fifty-two ballotings; and although the resolutions, with a strength equal to that of the Democratic "platform," affirmed the binding character of the compromise measures of 1850, and opposed all further agitation of the questions thus settled, as dangerous to the peace of the country, seventy delegates from free States, who had voted steadily for General Scott as the candidate, recorded their votes against this resolution, and many Whig papers in the North refused to be bound by it, and treated it with utter contumely. The result was the election of General Pierce as President, and William R. King of Alabama as Vice President, by the almost unprecedented majority of one hundred and five electoral votes more than was necessary for a choice. General Scott obtained the electoral votes of but four States, Massachusetts, Vermont, Kentucky and Tennessee; forty-two in all.

The reader will be interested to learn from the following private correspondence how Mr. Buchanan felt and acted before and after the nomination of General Pierce, and also how one of his prominent rivals, Governor Marcy, felt and acted towards him and others. It is refreshing to look back to the good nature and cool philosophy which could be exhibited by such men in regard to the great stake of the Presidency:

[GOVERNOR MARCY TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

ALBANY, May 31, 1852.

MY DEAR SIR:—

When your very kind letter of the 19th inst. was received, my time was much taken up by several transient persons passing through this place to Baltimore for a certain grave purpose. I delayed a reply to it until this annoyance should be over, but before that happened, I was unexpectedly called to New York, and have but just returned. This is my excuse for a seeming neglect.

I assure you I rejoice as much as you do at the removal of all obstructions, real or imaginary, to the resumption of our free and friendly correspondence.

I needed not your assurance to satisfy me that your course towards me had been fair and liberal, and you do me but justice in believing mine has been the same toward you.

Perhaps there has been a single departure from it, which in candor I am bound to confess, and hope to be able to avoid.

On being called to New York a few days ago, when the delegates were passing on to Baltimore, Mrs. Marcy proposed to accompany me, but as she is a zealous advocate of yours, and on that subject has a propagandist's spirit, I did not wish to have her associated too intimately with these delegates, particularly such of them as had favorable inclinations towards me. I suggested, therefore, that it would be best for her to delay for a short time her visit.

This little battery (excuse a military figure of speech) has kept up a brisk fire for you. To this I have not made much objection, but I did not wish to do anything myself to put it in a position where it would bear particularly on my friends in this critical moment of the contest. I submit to your candor to decide whether, if you had a wife—would that you had one—a glib-tongued wife, who was ever pressing my pretensions over your own, would you not have manœvered a little to restrict her operations, under reversed, but otherwise similar circumstances? If you declare against my course in this instance, I shall think you err, and ascribe your error to the fact that for want of experience you do not know the potency of such an adversary. An enemy in the camp is more dangerous than one outside of it.

While in New York, I conversed with many delegates from various sections of the country and of all kinds of preferences. From what I heard, I became more and more apprehensive of serious difficulties at Baltimore. If it be mere preferences the convention will have to contend with, it might get on without much trouble, but I thought I discovered a strong feeling of antagonism in too many of the delegates, particularly towards those who stand in a hopeful position. Still, I cherish a strong hope of an auspicious result to the party.

If you, who have such fair prospects, have schooled yourself into a sort of philosophical indifference as to the result, you can readily conceive how complaisantly I, who scarcely have a place on the list of those that hope they shall receive it, look upon the result. Those who never climb up cannot reasonably dread to break their limbs by a fall.

You, too, have got into a "Scott correspondence." I have read your letter with pleasure and satisfaction; it goes the whole figure as it ought to at this time. I had no difficulty in my response except in regard to the exercise of the veto power. I cannot but think that is a promise "not fit to be made," but any objection to meeting it directly would have been construed to mean more than was intended, and I responded to that as I did to the other interrogatories.

Very much to my surprise, but not so much to my regret, I find in the *Journal of Commerce* of Saturday, two of my private letters, written last

summer to a leading barn-burner, Hon. John Fine, formerly a M. C. from Governor Wright's county. They will serve to vindicate my course and repel the charge much urged against me by Mr. Dickinson and a few others, of having compromised my position on the adjustment measure in order to conciliate that section of the party.

The course I pursued towards them, and from which I have never swerved, but have succeeded in carrying out, is clearly disclosed in these letters. I had no agency in bringing them out. I have not seen them since they were written, and did not know that they were to be published.

Mr. Dickinson and a few of his friends are very decided—not to say bitter—against me, and scarcely less so against all the other candidates except General Cass. They are professedly for him. Mr. D.'s friends—it would be uncharitable to say he himself has any such thoughts—hope to bring about his nomination, and are shaping things so far as they can for such a result. They believe that his and their advocacy of General Cass, and sturdy opposition to all others, will give him nearly all of the General's friends in the event he has to be abandoned, an event which will not deeply grieve them; and they flatter themselves that the great favor with which Mr. D. is regarded in the South will render it easy to detach from you and transfer to him most of your supporters in that quarter. If you and General Cass are killed off, and he inherits the estate of both, his fortune will certainly be made. I do not comment upon the practicability of this theory. Well, if he is nominated, we must turn in and do what we can for him. Here, where he has been so bitter against the C—rs and against me, because they are willing to give me their support—where he denounces them as not belonging to the Democratic party—we shall have a hard task on our hands, and can hardly hope to give him the vote of the State; it will therefore be the more necessary that you and your friends should secure for him that of Pennsylvania. I know it is not kind to speculate on the chances of another rising upon your downfall, and therefore I will dismiss the subject; nor is it friendly to trouble you with this long letter at a critical conjuncture, when you want your time to cheer and guide your friends at Baltimore.

My epistle would be defective if it did not contain Mrs. M.'s express desire to be kindly remembered to you.

Yours truly,

W. L. MARCY.

[MARCY TO BUCHANAN.]

ALBANY, June 6, 1852.

MY DEAR SIR:—

In my most hopeful mood, if it can be truly said I have been in such a state of mind, I did not look to anything but a remote contingent remainder. I cannot, therefore, say that for myself I feel any disappointment at the result of the convention.

None of its proceedings—not even some of the latter ballotings—changed my settled convictions. There was a time when reflecting sober-minded men felt more than I expected they would feel at the prospect of success of Young America. Some of the agents and agencies at work in that direction caused considerable alarm.

I hope the course of my few friends in the convention has given no dissatisfaction. If they had earlier quitted me, they could not have gone together for any one, though some would have gone for you. I fear more than half would have acted with the friends of Cass and Douglas. They were about equally divided between hunkers and barn-burners, and it seems to me that no course they could have taken could have changed the result.

About the time the balloting commenced, I met with a passage in the last number of the *Edinburgh Review* which struck me as ominous of your fate, and as it is as good consolation as I can offer you, I will extract it, though it is rather long:

“Men (says Chamfort, a French writer) are like the fiends of Milton—they must make themselves dwarfs before they can enter into the Pandemonium of political life in a Republic. (Perhaps, if nature has made them dwarfs, it is the same thing.) Even in America it is notorious that men of this stamp (men of pre-eminent genius and abilities) are all but systematically excluded from high public office, and at best she recognizes only a single Webster among a wilderness of Jacksons and Harrisons, Taylors and Scotts.”

“And they must learn per force, painful as the truth must be, that commanding talents, especially of their order, are not really in request or needed for the ordinary work of democracy or autocracy.” I protest against the error in classing Jackson, yet there is in this extract some consolation for yourself and General Cass.

It does not suit my case, and moreover I am not in a condition to require consolation either from profane or sacred writings.

What do you think of the nomination of General Pierce? For our own State, I think it is about as well as any other that could have been made. I do not like to make an exception. We cannot make much out of his military services, but he is a likeable man, and has as much of “Young America” as we want.

I should like to read a letter of sage reflections from you about this time, as you are of my sect—a *political optimist*, not a better scholar—I know it will not take you long to digest your disappointment; but what will your State feel and say in regard to the result? This is a matter of public concernment. I should like to have your speculations on that point.

There is a person in my house who has been more solicitous about the balloting on your account than on mine and at times exhibited much exultation at your prospects. Her disappointment is greater than that of any other one under its roof.

I console her by an assurance of what I really feel, that you or any one else,



so far as happiness is concerned, are better off without a nomination than with one, even if it was sure to be followed by an election.

Yours truly,  
WM. L. MARCY.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO THE HON. DAVID R. PORTER.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, June 4, 1852.

MY DEAR SIR:—

From the result of the ballotings yesterday, I deem it highly improbable that I shall receive the nomination. The question will doubtless be finally decided before this can reach you; and I desire to say in advance that my everlasting gratitude is due to the Pennsylvania delegation, the Virginia delegation, and the other Southern delegations for their adherence to me throughout the ballotings of yesterday. I can say, with the most sincere truth, that I feel far more deeply the disappointment of my friends than my own disappointment. This has not, and will not, cost me a single pang. After a long and stormy public life, I shall go into final retirement without regret, and with a perfect consciousness that I have done my duty faithfully to my country in all the public situations in which I have been placed. I had cherished the belief that the Democracy of Pennsylvania had claims upon the Democracy of the country, which if asserted by the proper men in the proper spirit would be recognized in my favor. It seems I have been entirely mistaken both as regards my own standing and the influence of my State. I should not have believed this, had not our claims been presented and urged by a faithful and able delegation, fully equal, if not superior, to any which it was in the power of the State to send.

It is possible, should the nomination for the Presidency fall upon a Southern gentleman, that a proposition may be made to give Pennsylvania the Vice Presidency. Should such a contingency arise, which is not very probable, I shall not, under any circumstances, consent to the employment of my name in connection with that office. Indeed should I be nominated for it by the convention, *I would most assuredly decline*. It is the very last office under the Government I would desire to hold, and it would be no honor bestowed on good old Pennsylvania to have it conferred upon one of her sons.

When I speak of final retirement, I only mean that I shall never hold another office. I shall always feel and take an interest in favor of the Democratic cause; and this not only for the sake of principle, but to enable me to serve friends to whom I owe so much.

From your friend, very respectfully,  
JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO THE HON. CAVE JOHNSON.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, June 24, 1852.

MY DEAR SIR:—

If it were possible for me to complain of your conduct, I should give you a good scolding for not performing your promise. We were all anxiously expecting you at Wheatland from day to day; and if you had informed me you could not come I certainly should have met you in Philadelphia. I was very anxious to see you, and now God only knows when we shall meet. Whilst life endures, however, gratitude for your friendship and support shall remain deeply engraved on my heart.

I never felt any longing or anxious desire to be the President, and my disappointment did not cost me a single pang. My friends were faithful and true, and their efforts deserved if they could not command success. Personally, I am entirely satisfied with the result. When opportunity offers, I hope you will not fail to present my grateful acknowledgments to Generals Laferty and Polk, and to Messrs. Smith, Thomas and Shepherd, for their kind and valuable support in the hour of trial.

It is vain to disguise the fact that Pennsylvania is, to say the least, a doubtful State. I much fear the result. If defeated, no blame shall attach to me. I will do my duty to the party and the country. Both personally and politically General Pierce and Colonel King are highly acceptable to myself. What an inconsistent race the Whigs are! They have now ostensibly abandoned their old principles, and placed themselves on the Democratic platform—Fugitive Slave Law and all. From this we may expect river and harbor improvements intended to catch the Southwest; and such a modification of a revenue tariff as they knew would exactly correspond with the wishes of the Democratic ironmasters of Pennsylvania. I, however, indulge the hope, nay, the belief, that Pierce and King can be elected without the vote of Pennsylvania.

I was in my native county of Franklin a few days ago, and whilst there went to see a respectable farmer and miller, who had ever been a true and disinterested Democrat. I had been told he would not vote for Pierce and King, and being both a personal and political friend of my own, I thought I could change his purpose. In conversation he very soon told me he would never vote for Pierce. I asked if he would abandon the principles of his life and vote for the Whig candidate. He said he never had given and never would give a Whig vote. I reasoned with him a long time, but in vain. He said the Democracy of the country ought not to suffer the national convention to usurp the right of making any man they pleased a candidate before the people. That if the people yielded this, then a corrupt set of men who got themselves elected delegates, might, in defiance of the people's will, always make a President to suit their own views. That the Democracy had but one mode of putting this down, and that was, not to ratify the choice of the convention. He said that for himself he had felt very much inclined to oppose Mr. Polk for

this reason, but had yielded and given him a cordial support; but if the same game were successfully played a second time, then the national convention and not the people would select the President, and the most gross corruption and fraud would be the consequence. He disliked both General Cass and Mr. Douglas; but said he would have supported either, because they were known, their claims had been publicly discussed, and each had a large body of friends in the Democratic party, and there must be a yielding among the friends of the different candidates brought forward by the people of the country.

These were the reasons which my friend gave in the course of a long conversation. I state them to you, not that the withholding of his individual vote is of any great importance, but to show how many Democrats feel. I had heard the same reasons before among the people, but not so fully discussed; and my letter, published in the *Union* of yesterday morning, had a special view to these objections.

They could have scarcely made a respectable fight against me in Pennsylvania. In many counties my nomination would have shivered the Whig party. In this county, where the Whig majority at a full election is 5,000, I do not believe they could have obtained a majority of 500. But this is all past and gone.

Miss Hetty has but little expectation of being able to procure you a suitable housekeeper. She will try, however, and should she fall upon one, will write to you.

Please to present my kindest regards to Mrs. Garland and the little boys and girls, and believe me ever to be,

Your faithful and grateful friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO JOHN BINNS, ESQ.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, July 26, 1852.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Although I have too long omitted to answer your kind letter, yet you may rest assured I sympathized with you deeply in your affliction for the loss of her who had so long been the partner of your joys and your sorrows.

My own disappointment did not cost me a single pang. I felt it far more on account of my friends than myself. Faithful and devoted as they have been, it would have afforded me heartfelt pleasure to testify my gratitude by something more substantial than words. Although I should have assumed the duties of the office with cheerful confidence, yet I know from near observation that it is a crown of thorns. Its cares carried Mr. Polk to a premature grave, and the next four years will probably embrace the most trying period of our history. May God grant us a safe deliverance! With all due admiration for the military services of General Scott, I should consider his election a serious calamity for the country.

General Pierce is a sound radical Democrat of the old Jeffersonian school, and possesses highly respectable abilities. I think he is firm and energetic, without which no man is fit to be President. Should he fall into proper hands, he will administer the Government wisely and well. Heaven save us from the mad schemes of "Young America!"

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO NAHUM CAPEN, ESQ.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, June 26, 1852.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Many thanks for your kind letter. I felt neither mortified nor much disappointed at my own defeat. Although "the signs of the times" had been highly propitious immediately before the Baltimore Convention, I am too old a political navigator to rely with explicit confidence upon bright skies for fair weather. The Democracy of my own great State are mortified and disappointed, but I trust that ere long these feelings will vanish, and we shall be able to present a solid and invincible column to our political opponents.

The Presidency is a distinction far more glorious than the crown of any hereditary monarch in Christendom; but yet it is a crown of thorns. In the present political and critical position of our country, its responsibilities will prove to be fearful. I should have met them with cheerful confidence, whilst I know I shall be far more happy in a private station, where I expect to remain.

With my ardent wishes for the success of the History of Democracy, I remain

Very respectfully your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO ALEXANDER MCKEEVER, ESQ.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, July 26, 1852.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received and perused your kind letter with much satisfaction, and, like you, I am far better satisfied with the nomination of General Pierce than I would have been with that of General Cass or any of the other candidates. I sincerely and ardently desire his election, as well as the defeat of General Scott, and shall do my duty throughout the contest in Pennsylvania in every respect, except in going from county to county to make stump speeches.

It is my intention to address my fellow-citizens of this county, on some suitable occasion, on the Presidential election, and express my opinions freely.

My recommendations to the governor were but little regarded, but I made but very few. I can say with truth that your disappointment mortified me very much, because upon every principle of political justice and policy you

were entitled to the place. Should it ever be in my power to serve you, I shall eagerly embrace the opportunity.

It is impossible, as yet, to form any accurate conjecture as to what will be Scott's majority in this county; but I cannot believe it will reach that of General Taylor. I am glad to learn your opinion that the majority in Delaware county will be less than it was in 1848. Pierce and King can be elected without the vote of Pennsylvania, but it would be a burning shame for the Democracy of the Keystone to be defeated on this occasion.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

The most important service rendered by Mr. Buchanan to his party in this election—and with him a service to his party was alike a service to his country—was a speech made at Greensburgh in Pennsylvania, on the 7th of October, 1852, in opposition to the election of General Scott. It deserves to be reproduced now, both on account of its clear exhibition of the political history of that period and the nature of some of the topics which it discussed.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS: I thank you most sincerely for the cordial and enthusiastic cheers with which you have just saluted me. I am proud, on this occasion, to acknowledge my deep obligations to the Democratic party of Westmoreland county. The generous and powerful support which I have received from your great and glorious Democracy throughout my public career shall ever remain deeply engraved on my heart. I am grateful for the past, not for what is to be in future. I ask no more from my country than what I have already enjoyed. May peace and prosperity be your lot throughout life, and may "The Star in the West" continue to shine with increasing splendor, and ever benign influence on the favored Western portion of our Commonwealth for ages to come!

I congratulate you, fellow-citizens, upon the nomination of Franklin Pierce and William R. King, for the two highest offices in your gift. This nomination has proved to be a most fortunate event for the Democratic party of the country. It has produced unanimity everywhere in our great and glorious party; and when firmly united we can stand against the world in arms. It has terminated, I trust forever, the divisions which existed in our ranks; and which, but a few short months ago, portended dire defeat in the present Presidential contest. The North, the South, the East and the West are now generous rivals, and the only struggle amongst them is which shall do the most to secure the triumph of the good old cause of Democracy, and of Franklin Pierce and William R. King, our chosen standard bearers.

And why should we not all be united in support of Franklin Pierce? It is his peculiar distinction, above all other public men within my knowledge,

that he has never had occasion to take a single step backwards. What speech, vote, or sentiment of his whole political career has been inconsistent with the purest and strictest principles of Jeffersonian Democracy? Our opponents, with all their vigilance and research, have not yet been able to discover a single one. His public character as a Democrat is above all exception. In supporting him, therefore, we shall do no more than sustain in his person our dear and cherished principles.

Our candidate, throughout his life, has proved himself to be peculiarly unselfish. The offices and honors which other men seek with so much eagerness, have sought him only to be refused. He has either positively declined to accept, or has resigned the highest stations which the Federal Government or his own native State could bestow upon him.

Indeed, the public character of General Pierce is so invulnerable that it has scarcely been seriously assaulted. Our political opponents have, therefore, in perfect desperation, been driven to defame his private character. At first, they denounced him as a drunkard, a friend of the infamous anti-Catholic test in the Constitution of New Hampshire, and a coward. In what have these infamous accusations resulted? They have already recoiled upon their inventors. The poisoned chalice has been returned to their own lips. No decent man of the Whig party will now publicly venture to repeat these slanders.

Frank Pierce a coward! That man a coward, who, when his country was involved in a foreign war, abandoned a lucrative and honorable profession and all the sweets and comforts of domestic life in his own happy family, to become a private volunteer soldier in the ranks! How preposterous! And why a coward?

According to the testimony of General Scott himself, he was in such a sick, wounded, and enfeebled condition, that he was "just able to keep his saddle!" Yet his own gallant spirit impelled him to lead his brigade into the bloody battle of Cherubusco. But his exhausted physical nature was not strong enough to sustain the brave soul which animated it, and he sank insensible on the field in front of his brigade. Was this evidence of cowardice? These circumstances, so far from being an impeachment of his courage, prove conclusively that he possesses that high quality in an uncommon degree. Almost any other man, nay, almost any other brave man, in his weak and disabled condition, would have remained in his tent; but the promptings of his gallant and patriotic spirit impelled him to rush into the midst of the battle. To what lengths will not party rancor and malignity proceed when such high evidences of indomitable courage are construed into proofs of cowardice? How different was General Scott's opinion from that of the revilers of Franklin Pierce! It was on this very occasion that he conferred upon him the proud title of "the gallant Brigadier-General Pierce."

The cordial union of the Democratic party throughout the country presents a sure presage of approaching victory. Even our political opponents admit that we are in the majority when thoroughly united. And I venture now to predict that, whether with or without the vote of Pennsylvania, Franklin

Pierce and William R. King, should their lives be spared, will as certainly be elected President and Vice President of the United States on the first Tuesday in November next, as that the blessed sun shall rise on that auspicious day. We feel the inspiration of victory from the infallible indications of public opinion throughout our sister States.

Shall this victory be achieved without the voice or vote of Pennsylvania? No President has ever yet been elected without her vote. Shall this historical truth be reversed, and shall Pierce and King be elected in November, despite the vote of the good old Keystone? God bless her! No—never, never, shall the Democracy of our great and glorious State be subjected to this disgrace.

And yet, strange to say, the Whigs at Washington and the Whigs throughout every State of the Union claim the vote of Pennsylvania with the utmost apparent confidence. To secure her vote was one of the main inducements for the nomination of General Scott over the head of Millard Fillmore. Is there one unprejudiced citizen of any party in the United States, who can lay his hand upon his heart and declare that he believes General Scott would make as good and as safe a President as Mr. Fillmore? No, fellow-citizens, all of us must concur in opinion with Mr. Clay, that Fillmore had superior claims and qualifications to those of Scott for the highest civil station. Availability, and availability alone, produced the nomination of Scott.

The Whigs well knew that the Democrats of the Keystone were in the majority. What must then be done to secure her vote? Pennsylvania Democrats must be seduced from their party allegiance—they must be induced to abandon the political altars at which they have so long worshipped—they must be persuaded to renounce the principles of Jefferson and of Jackson, by the nomination of a military hero; and this hero, too, a most bitter and uncompromising Whig. General Scott is none of your half-way Whigs—he is not like General Taylor, a Whig, but not an ultra Whig. He goes the whole. Is there a single Whig doctrine, or a single Whig principle, however odious to the Democracy, to which he is not devoted, which he has not announced and taught under his own hand? If there be, I have never heard it mentioned. Nay, more: these odious doctrines are with him not merely strong opinions, but they are absolute convictions, rules of faith and of practice. The Bank of the United States, the Bankrupt Law, the distribution of the proceeds of the public lands among the States, the abolishment of the veto power from the Constitution; in short, all the Whig measures against which the Democracy of the country have always waged incessant war—are so many articles of General Scott's political creed. When asked, in October, 1841, whether, "if nominated as a candidate for the Presidency, would you accept the nomination?" after expressing his strong approbation of all the Whig measures to which I have just referred, as well as others of a similar character, he answers: "I beg leave respectfully to reply—Yes; provided that I be not required to renounce any principles professed above. My principles are convictions."

I will do him the justice to declare that he has never yet recanted or renounced any one of these principles. They are still convictions with him; and yet the Democracy of Pennsylvania are asked to recant and renounce their own most solemn and deliberate convictions, and vote for a candidate for the Presidency, merely on account of his military fame, who, if elected, would exert the power and influence of his administration to subvert and to destroy all the essential principles which bind us together as members of the great and glorious Democratic party of the Union. Is not the bare imputation, much more the confident belief, that the Democrats of Pennsylvania will renounce their birthright for such a miserable mess of pottage, the highest insult which can be offered to them? The Whigs, in effect, say to you: We know you are Democrats—we know you are in the majority; but yet we believe you will renounce the political faith of your fathers, that you may shout hosannas to a successful general, and bow down before the image of military glory which we have erected for the purpose of captivating your senses.

Thank Heaven! thus far, at least, these advocates of availability have been disappointed. The soup societies and the fuss and feather clubs have yet produced but little impression on the public mind. They have failed even to raise enthusiastic shouts among the Whigs, much less to make any apostates from the Democratic ranks.

What a subject it is for felicitation in every patriotic heart, that the days have passed away, I trust, forever, when mere military services, however distinguished, shall be a passport to the chief civil magistracy of the country!

I would lay down this broad and strong proposition, which ought in all future time to be held sacred as an article of Democratic faith, that no man ought ever to be transferred by the people from the chief command of the army of the United States to the highest civil office within their gift. The reasons for this rule of faith to guide the practice of a Republican people are overwhelming.

The annals of mankind, since the creation, demonstrate this solemn truth. The history of all the ruined republics, both of ancient and modern times, teaches us this great lesson. From Cæsar to Cromwell, and from Cromwell to Napoleon, this history presents the same solemn warning,—beware of elevating to the highest civil trust the commander of your victorious armies. Ask the wrecks of the ruined republics scattered all along the tide of time, what occasioned their downfall; and they will answer in sepulchral tones, the elevation of victorious generals to the highest civil power in the State. One common fate from one common cause has destroyed them all. Will mankind never learn wisdom from the experience of past generations? Has history been written in vain? Mr. Clay, in his Baltimore speech of 1827, expressed this great truth in emphatic terms, when he implored the Almighty Governor of the world, “to visit our favored land with war, with pestilence, with famine, with any scourge other than military rule, or a blind and heedless enthusiasm for a military renown.” He was right in the principle, wrong in its application.



The hero, the man of men to whom it applied, was then at the Hermitage,—a plain and private farmer of Tennessee. He had responded to the call of his country when war was declared against Great Britain, and had led our armies to victory ; but when the danger had passed away, he returned with delight to the agricultural pursuits of his beloved Hermitage. Although, like Franklin Pierce, he had never sought civil offices and honors, yet he was an influential and conspicuous member of the convention which framed the constitution of Tennessee, was their first Representative and their first Senator in Congress,—afterwards a Judge of their Supreme Court,—then again a Senator in Congress, which elevated station he a second time resigned, from a love of retirement. He was brought almost literally from the plough, as Cincinnatus had been, to assume the chief civil command. The same observations would apply to the illustrious and peerless Father of his Country, as well as to General Harrison. They were soldiers, only in the day and hour of danger, when the country demanded their services ; and both were elevated from private life, from the shades of Mount Vernon and the North Bend, to the supreme civil magistracy of the country. Neither of them was a soldier by profession, and both had illustrated high civil appointments. General Taylor, it is true, had been a soldier, and always a soldier, but had never risen to the chief command. It remained for the present Whig party to select as their candidate for the Presidency the commanding General of the army, who had been a man of war, and nothing but a man of war from his youth upwards. This party is now straining every nerve to transfer him from the headquarters of the army, to the chair of state, which has been adorned by Washington, Jefferson, Madison and Jackson, without even a momentary resignation of his present high office,—without the least political training,—without any respite, without any breathing time between the highest military and the highest civil honor. With what tremendous force does the solemn warning of Mr. Clay apply to the case of General Scott!

Far be it from me to say or to insinuate that General Scott would have either the ability or the will to play the part of Cæsar, of Cromwell, or of Bonaparte. Still, the precedent is dangerous in the extreme. If these things can be done in the green tree, what will be done in the dry ? If the precedent can be established in the comparative infancy and purity of our institutions, of elevating to the Presidency a successful commander-in-chief of our armies, what may be the disastrous consequences when our population shall number one hundred millions, and when our armies in time of war may be counted by hundreds of thousands. In those days, some future military chieftain, desirous of obtaining supreme power by means of an election to the Presidency, may point back to such a precedent and say, that in the earlier and purer days of the Republic, our ancestors did not fear to elevate the commander of their conquering armies to this, the highest civil station. Let us not forge chains in advance for our descendants.

The fathers of the Republic were deeply alive to these great truths. They were warned by the experience of past times that liberty is Hesperian fruit,

and can only be preserved by watchful jealousy. Hence in all their constitutions of government, and in all their political writings, we find them inculcating, in the most solemn manner, a jealousy of standing armies and their leaders, and a strict subordination of the military to the civil power. But even if there were no danger to our liberties from such a precedent, the habit of strict obedience and absolute command acquired by the professional soldier throughout a long life, almost necessarily disqualifies him for the administration of our Democratic Republican Government. Civil government is not a mere machine, such as a regular army. In conducting it, allowance must be made for that love of liberty and spirit of independence which characterize our people. Such allowances can never be made,—authority can never be tempered with moderation and discretion, by a professional soldier, who has been accustomed to have his military orders obeyed with the unerring certainty of despotic power.

Again:—What fatal effects would it not have on the discipline and efficiency of the army to have aspirants for the Presidency among its principal officers? How many military cliques would be formed—how much intriguing and electioneering would exist in a body which ought to be a unit, and have no other object in view except to obey the lawful command of the President and to protect and defend the country? If all the political follies of General Scott's life were investigated, and these are not few, I venture to say that nearly the whole of them have resulted from his long continued aspirations for the Presidency. At last, he has obtained the Whig nomination. He has defeated his own constitutional commander-in-chief. The military power has triumphed over the civil power. The Constitution declares that "the President shall be commander-in-chief of the army and navy of the United States," but the subordinate, the actual commander of the army, has supplanted his superior. What a spectacle is this; and how many serious reflections might it inspire! In times of war and of danger, what fatal consequences might result to the country from the fact, that the President and the commanding General of the army are rival and hostile candidates for the Presidency! But I shall not pursue this train of remark. It is my most serious conviction, that General Scott would have stood far higher, both before the present generation and posterity, had he never been a candidate for the Presidency. The office which he now holds, and deservedly holds, ought to satisfy the ambition of any man. This the American people will determine by a triumphant majority on the first Tuesday of November next. This will prove to be one of the most fortunate events in our history—auspicious at the present time, and still more auspicious for future generations. It will establish a precedent, which will, I trust, prevent future commanders-in-chief of the American army from becoming candidates for the Presidential office.

Again:—To make the army a hot bed for Presidential aspirants will be to unite the powerful influence of all its aspiring officers in favor of foreign wars, as the best means of acquiring military glory, and thus placing themselves in the modern line of safe precedents, as candidates for the Presidency and for

other high civil offices. The American people are sufficiently prone to war without any such stimulus. But enough of this.

I shall now proceed to discuss more minutely the civil qualifications of General Scott for the Presidency. It is these which immediately and deeply concern the American people, and not his military glory. Far be it from me, however, to depreciate his military merits. As an American citizen, I am proud of them. They will ever constitute a brilliant page in the historical glory of our country. The triumphant march of the brave army under his command, from Vera Cruz to the city of Mexico, will be ever memorable in our annals. And yet he can never be esteemed the principal hero of the Mexican war. This distinction justly belongs to General Taylor. It was his army which at Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma, and Monterey, first broke the spirit of the Mexican troops; and the crowning victory of Buena Vista completely disorganized the Mexican army. There Santa Anna, with 20,000 men, the largest, the best and the bravest army which Mexico has ever sent into the field, was routed by less than five thousand of our troops. To the everlasting glory of our volunteer militia, this great, this glorious victory, was achieved by them, assisted by only four hundred and fifty-three regulars. The Mexican army was so disorganized—the spirit of the Mexican people was so subdued, by the unparalleled victory of Buena Vista, that the way was thus opened for the march from Vera Cruz to Mexico. Yet God forbid that I should, in the slightest degree, detract from the glory so justly due to Scott's army and its distinguished commander in the battles which preceded their triumphant entry into the capital of Mexico.

But I repeat, my present purpose is to deal with General Scott as a civilian—as a candidate for the Presidency, and not as a military commander.

The sun presents dark spots upon its disc; and the greatest men who have ever lived, with the exception of our own Washington, have not been without their failings. Surely General Scott is not an exception to the common lot of humanity. In his temper he is undoubtedly irritable and jealous of rivals; whilst the Presidency, above all other stations on earth, requires a man of firm and calm temper, who, in his public conduct, will never be under the control of his passions.

General Scott has quarrelled with General Wilkinson—he has quarrelled with General Gaines—he has quarrelled with General Jackson—he has quarrelled with De Witt Clinton—he has quarrelled with the administration of John Quincy Adams—he has quarrelled with the people of Florida to such a degree that General Jackson was obliged reluctantly to recall him from the command of the army in the Seminole war—he has quarrelled with General Worth, the Marshal Ney of our military service—he has quarrelled with General Pillow—he has quarrelled with the gallant and lamented Duncan—and unless report speaks falsely, he has quarrelled with General Taylor. Whenever any military man has approached the rank of being his rival for fame, he has quarrelled with that man. Now, I shall not pretend to decide, whether he has been in the right or in the wrong, in all or in any of these quarrels; but this I shall say,

that a man possessing such forethought, discretion and calm temper as the Presidential office requires, might and would have avoided many or most of these difficulties. A plain and sensible neighbor of mine asked me, in view of these facts, if I did not think, should General Scott be elected President, he would play the devil and break things?

General Scott is, beyond all question, suspicious, when the President of the United States, above all other men, ought to look upon events with no prejudiced or jaundiced eye. No man ever exhibited this trait of character in a stronger light than he has done towards the administration of Mr. Polk. He was selected by the President to lead our armies in Mexico, with my humble though cordial assent. The political life or death of the administration depended upon his success. Our fate, both in the estimation of the present times and throughout all posterity, depended upon his success. His defeat would have been our ruin. And yet he most strangely conceived the notion, that for the purpose of destroying him we were willing to destroy ourselves. Hence his belief of a fire in the rear more formidable than the fire in the front. Hence his belief that, jealous of his glory, we did not exert ourselves to furnish him the troops and munitions of war necessary for the conquest of Mexico. Did unjust and unfounded suspicion ever extend thus far in the breast of any other mortal man? The admirable and unanswerable letter of Governor Marcy, of April 21, 1848, in reply to his complaints, triumphantly vindicates the administration of Mr. Polk against all these extraordinary charges. Let any man carefully and dispassionately read that letter, and say, if he can, that General Scott, in self-control, temper and disposition, is fit to become the successor to General Washington, in the Presidential chair.

The world knows, everybody who has approached him knows, that General Scott is vainglorious to an excessive degree. Indeed, his vanity would be strikingly ridiculous, had he not performed so many distinguished military services as almost to justify boasting. This, however, is an amiable weakness; and whilst it does not disqualify him from performing the duties of a President, this itself renders it morally impossible that he should ever reach that station. Modesty combined with eminent merit always secures popular applause; but the man who becomes the trumpeter of his own exploits, no matter how high his deserts may be, can never become an object of popular enthusiasm and affection. General Scott's character, in this respect, is perfectly understood by the instinctive good sense of the American people. "Fuss and Feathers!" a volume could not more accurately portray the vanity of his character than this soubriquet by which he is universally known. His friends affect to glory in this title, but with all their efforts they can never render it popular. Napoleon was endeared to his army by his designation of "the little Corporal;" General Jackson, by that of "Old Hickory;" and General Taylor was "Rough and Ready;" but what shall we say to "Fuss and Feathers?" Was such a soubriquet ever bestowed upon a General who enjoyed the warm affections of his army? It raises no shout,—it awakens no

sympathy,—it excites no enthusiasm,—it falls dead upon the heart of an intelligent people.

In order further to illustrate the want of civil qualifications of General Scott for the Presidency, I propose next to discuss his famous political letters. In these he has written his own political history. "Oh! that mine enemy would write a book!" was an exclamation of old. General Scott's epistles have accomplished this work, though I deny that he has any enemies among the American people.

In 1848, when speaking of these letters, Thurlow Weed, who at the present moment is one of General Scott's most able, distinguished, and efficient supporters, employs the following language: "In the character of General Scott there is much, very much to commend and admire. But the mischief is, there is weakness in all he says or does about the Presidency. Immediately after the close of the campaign of 1840, he wrote a gratuitous letter, making himself a candidate, in which all sorts of unwise things were said 'to return and plague his friends, if he should be a candidate.' And since that time, with a fatuity that seizes upon men who get bewildered in gazing at the White House, he has been suffering his pen to dim the glories achieved by his sword."

The letter to which special allusion is made must be his famous letter of October 25, 1841. Though not an "old Fogey," I retain a vivid recollection of the circumstances under which this letter was written. It made its appearance the month after the termination of the famous extra session of Congress, which had been convened by the proclamation of General Harrison. This session commenced on the 31st May, and terminated on the 13th September, 1841.

And here, permit me to say, that I do not believe the history of legislative bodies, in this or any other country, ever presented more argumentative, eloquent, and powerful debating than was exhibited throughout this session. Nearly all the important political questions which had divided the two great parties of the country from the beginning were most ably discussed. Never did any public body of the same number present a stronger array of matured talent than the Senate of that day. There were Clay, Berrien, Clayton, Mangum, Archer, Preston, and Southard on the Whig side; and Benton, Calhoun, Wright, Woodbury, Walker, Pierce, and Linn on the side of the Democrats, and these men were in the meridian of their glory. I would advise every young Democrat within the sound of my voice to procure and carefully study the debates of this session.

Mr. Clay was, as he deserved to be, the lord of the ascendant in the Whig ranks. The Whig majority of both houses was controlled by his spirit. He was their acknowledged leader, and went to work in dashing style. Within a brief period, he carried all the great Whig measures triumphantly through Congress. The Independent Treasury was repealed; the proceeds of the public lands were distributed among the States; the Bankrupt Law was passed; and an old-fashioned Bank of the United States would have been established,

had it not been for the veto of John Tyler, a man who has never been as highly estimated as he deserves, either by the Democratic party or the country.

Mr. Clay left the Senate, at the close of the session, the acknowledged leader and the favorite Presidential candidate of the great Whig party. Under these circumstances, it became necessary for General Scott to do something to head his great rival and prevent him from remaining master of the field. He must prove himself to be as good a Whig as Henry Clay, and in addition a much better Anti-Mason. It was the common remark of the day, when his letter of October, 1841, appeared, that he had out-whigged even Henry Clay. This is the "gratuitous letter, making himself a candidate, in which all sorts of unwise things were said to 'return and plague his friends, if he should be a candidate.'"

This letter is not addressed to any individual, but is an epistle general to the faithful; and I must do him the justice to say that in it he has concealed nothing from the public eye. After some introductory remarks, it is divided into seven heads, which, with their subdivisions, embrace all the articles of Whig faith as understood at that day; and in addition, the author presents his views on "secret or oath-bound societies."

I shall briefly review some of these articles of General Scott's political faith:

1. "The Judiciary." General Scott expresses his convictions that the decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States, on all constitutional questions, should be considered final and conclusive by the people, and especially by their functionaries, "except, indeed, in the case of a judicial decision enlarging power and against liberty." And how is such a decision to be corrected? Why, forsooth, "any dangerous error of this sort, he says, can always be easily corrected by an amendment of the Constitution, in one of the modes prescribed by that instrument itself." Easily corrected! It might be so if a military order could accomplish the object; but an amendment of the Constitution of the United States, whether fortunately or unfortunately for the country, is almost a political impossibility. In order to accomplish it, in by far the least impracticable of the two modes prescribed, the affirmative action of two-thirds of both Houses of Congress and of the Legislatures of three-fourths of the several States is required. With these obstacles in the way, when will an amendment of the Constitution ever be made?

But why did such a reverence for the decisions of the Supreme Court become an article of General Scott's faith? Simply because General Jackson had vetoed the Bank of the United States, believing in his conscience, such an institution to be unconstitutional. He had sworn before his God and his country to support the Constitution; and he could not, without committing moral perjury, approve a bill, which in his soul he believed to be a violation of this great charter of our liberties. He could not yield his honest convictions, simply because the Supreme Court had expressed the opinion that Congress possesses the power to charter such a bank.

But, according to the logic of General Scott, General Jackson and Mr.

Tyler, when bills to charter a Bank of the United States were presented to them, had no right to form or express any opinion on the subject of their constitutionality. The Supreme Court had done this for them in advance. This court is to be the constitutional conscience-keeper of the President. "Practically, therefore (says General Scott), for the people and especially their functionaries (of whom the President is the highest) to deny, to disturb, or impugn, principles thus constitutionally established, strike me as of evil example, if not of a direct revolutionary tendency." A Bank of the United States must be held constitutional, by the people and their functionaries, as an article of faith, until two-thirds of both Houses of Congress and three-fourths of the State legislatures shall reverse the decision of the Supreme Court by an amendment of the Constitution. The President must then wait before he can exercise the right of judging for himself until doomsday. On the same principle, we must all now hold, as an article of faith, that the odious and infamous sedition law of the reign of terror is constitutional, because the judiciary have so affirmed, and this decision never has been, and never will be, reversed by a constitutional amendment. This is double-distilled Whiggery of the most sublimated character. Truly, "there is weakness in all that General Scott says or does about the Presidency."

Let us never forget that a Bank of the United States is a fixed idea with the Whig party, which nothing can ever remove. On this subject, like the old Bourbons, they forget nothing and learn nothing. They are inseparably joined to this idol. They believe that a concentration of the money power of the country, in the form of such a bank, is necessary to secure the ascendancy of the Whig party in the Government; and there is nothing more certain in futurity than that they will establish such a bank, should they ever obtain the power. Experience has taught us a lesson on this subject which we ought never to forget. Throughout the political campaign of 1840, which resulted in the election of General Harrison, it was nowhere avowed by the Whigs, that they intended to charter a Bank of the United States. This was carefully concealed from the public eye. On the contrary, many of their distinguished leaders declared themselves hostile to such an institution, and one of them, Mr. Badger, afterwards a member of the cabinet, indignantly pronounced the assertion that General Harrison was in favor of such a bank to be a falsehood. But mark the sequel. No sooner was Harrison elected and a majority secured in both Houses of Congress, than the Whigs immediately proceeded in hot haste, at the extra session, to pass a bill establishing a Bank of the United States, which would have become a law, but for the veto of John Tyler. What we have witnessed in 1841, we shall again witness in 1853, *the veto* only excepted, should General Scott be elected President and be sustained by a Whig majority in both Houses of Congress.

2. "The Executive Veto." To abolish this veto power is another article of General Scott's political faith, as announced in his letter of October, 1841. To be more precise, the General would have the Constitution amended for the second time, in the same epistle, so as to overcome the Executive veto

"by a bare majority in each House of Congress of all the members elected to it—say for the benefit of reflection, at the end of ten days from the return of the bill." What a farce! An Executive veto to be overcome and nullified by a bare majority of the very Congress which had but ten days before sent the same bill to the President for his approval! Better, far better, adopt the manly course of abolishing the veto altogether, than to resort to this subterfuge.

But why has the abolishment of the Executive veto become an article of Whig faith? Simply because General Jackson and Mr. Tyler each vetoed bills to establish a Bank of the United States! "Still harping on my daughter." The Whigs have determined to destroy the veto power, which has twice prevented them from creating an institution which they love above all other political objects. The veto power has saved the country from the corrupt and corrupting influence of a bank; and it is this alone which has rendered it so odious to the Whig party.

This power is the least dangerous of all the great powers conferred by the Constitution upon the President; because nothing but a strong sense of public duty and a deep conviction that he will be sustained by the people can ever induce him to array himself against a majority of both Houses of Congress. It has been exercised but in comparatively few instances since the origin of the Federal Government; and I am not aware that it has ever been exercised in any case, which has not called forth the approving voice of a large majority of the American people. Confident I am, it is highly popular in Pennsylvania.

"Rotation in office" is the next head of General Scott's letter. Throughout the Presidential contest, which resulted in the election of General Harrison, it was the fashion of the Whigs to proscribe proscription; and to denounce Democratic Presidents for removing their political enemies and appointing their political friends to office. General Scott, in his letter, comes up to the Whig standard in this, as in all other respects. In his profession of faith, he could not even avoid a fling against the hero and the sage then in retirement at the Hermitage. He says: "I speak on this head from what I witnessed in 1829-30 (the commencement of General Jackson's administration), of the cruel experiments on a large scale, then made upon the sensibilities of the country, and the mischiefs to the public interests which early ensued."

But what was the Whig practice upon the subject after they had obtained power? General Jackson was magnanimous, kind-hearted and merciful, and to my own knowledge he retained a very large proportion of Whig clerks in the public offices at Washington. I ask how many Democrats now remain in those offices? Nay, the present administration has even proscribed old widows whose husbands had been Democrats. In the city of Lancaster, they removed from the post-office an old lady of this character, who had performed her duties to the entire satisfaction of the public of all parties, to make way for a political (I admit a respectable political) friend. To the credit of General Taylor's memory be it spoken, he refused to make war upon this old lady.



But in this respect, a change has come over the spirit of General Scott's dream. Of this the Whigs are satisfied. If they were not, small would be his chance—much smaller even than it now is, of reaching the Presidential chair. In his letter, accepting the nomination, he says:—"In regard to the general policy of the administration, if elected, I should, of course, look among those who may approve that policy, for the agents to carry it into execution; and I would seek to cultivate harmony and fraternal sentiment throughout the Whig party, without attempting to reduce its members by proscription to exact conformity to my own views!"

"Harmony and fraternal sentiment throughout the Whig party!" His charity, though large for Whigs, does not extend to Democrats. He knows, however, that his own party are divided into supporters of himself for his own sake, whilst spitting upon the platform on which he stands—and those who love the platform so well that for its sake they have even consented, though reluctantly, to acquiesce in his nomination—into those Free Soil Whigs who denounce the Fugitive Slave Law, and those Whigs who are devoted heart and soul to its maintenance. In this dilemma, he will not attempt to reduce the discordant brethren by proscription to exact conformity to his own views. Southern Whigs and Northern Free Soilers are therefore both embraced within the broad sweep of his charity. He seeks to cultivate harmony and fraternal sentiment among the Seward Whigs and the National Whigs by seating them all together at the same table to enjoy the loaves and the fishes. But woe to the vanquished—woe to the Democrats! They shall not even receive a single crumb which may fall from the table of the Presidential banquet.

"One Presidential Term," is the subject which he next discusses. Here he boggles at one Presidential term. He seems reluctant to surrender the most elevated and the most lucrative office, next to that of President, and this, too, an office for life, for the sake of only four years in the White House. He again, therefore, for the third time, in the same letter, proposes to amend the Constitution, just as if this were as easy as to wheel a division of his army on a parade day, so as to extend the Presidential term to six years. Four years are too short a term for General Scott. It must be prolonged. The people must be deprived of the power of choosing their President at the end of so brief a period as four years. But such an amendment of the Constitution, he ought to have known, was all moonshine. The General, then, declines to pledge himself to serve but for one term, and this for the most extraordinary reason. I shall quote his own words; he says:—"But I do not consider it respectful to the people, nor otherwise proper, in a candidate to solicit favor on a pledge that, if elected, he will not accept a second nomination. It looks too much like a bargain tendered to other aspirants—yield to me now; I shall soon be out of your way; too much like the interest that sometimes governs the cardinals in the choice of a Pope, many voting for themselves first, and, if without success, finally for the most superannuated, in order that the election may sooner come round again."

He was, then, you may be sure, still a Native American.

To say the very least, this imputation of selfishness and corruption against the cardinals in the election of a Pope, is in bad taste in a political letter written by a candidate for the Presidency. It was in exceedingly bad taste, in such an epistle, thus to stigmatize the highest dignitaries of the ancient Catholic church, in the performance of their most solemn and responsible public duty to God, on this side of eternity. From my soul, I abhor the practice of mingling up religion with politics. The doctrine of all our Constitutions, both Federal and State, is, that every man has an indefeasible right to worship his God, according to the dictates of his own conscience. He is both a bigot and a tyrant who would interfere with that sacred right. When a candidate is before the people for office, the inquiry ought never even to be made, what form of religious faith he professes; but only, in the language of Mr. Jefferson, "Is he honest; is he capable?" Far be it from me to charge or even insinuate that General Scott would desire to introduce religion into party politics; and yet I consider it exceedingly improper for him, in a political letter, when a candidate for the Presidency, to have made this charge against the venerable cardinals of the Catholic church. Such a charge, emanating from so high a source, could not fail to wound the feelings of a large and highly respectable Christian community. This has necessarily, to some extent, brought religious discussions into the Presidential contest.

"Leading measures of the late extra session of Congress." This is the next head of General Scott's epistle, to which I advert. He swallows all those leading measures at a single gulp. "If," says he, "I had had the honor of a vote on the occasion, it would have been given in favor of the Land Distribution Bill, the Bankrupt Bill, and the second bill for creating a Fiscal Corporation, having long been under a conviction that in peace, as in war, something efficient in the nature of a Bank of the United States, is not only 'necessary and proper,' but indispensable to the successful operations of the Treasury!"

The Land Distribution Bill. This is emphatically a high toned Whig measure, which had been once crushed by General Jackson's message of December, 1833. Mr. Clay, its illustrious author, was the very essence, the life and soul of Whiggery. It proposes to distribute the proceeds of the public lands among the several States. It proposes to surrender to the several States that immense and bountiful fund provided by our ancestors, which is always our surest resource, in times of war and danger, when our revenue from imports fails. In the days of Jackson, Van Buren and Polk, the Democratic doctrine was,—I fear it is not so at present,—to preserve this fund in the common Treasury, as a sacred trust, to enable Congress to execute the enumerated powers conferred upon them by the Constitution, for the equal benefit of all the States and the people. Should Congress give away the public lands to the States, they will deprive themselves of the power of bestowing land bounties upon the soldiers and the sailors who fight the battles of your country, and of granting liberal terms of purchase to those hardy

pioneers who make the wilderness to bloom and to blossom as the rose. What will become of this policy if you distribute the proceeds of these lands among the States? Then every State will have a direct interest in preventing any donations of the public lands, either to old soldiers or actual settlers; because every acre thus given will so much lessen the dividend to each of the States interested. Should this Distribution Bill ever prevail, it will make the States mere dependencies upon the central Government for a large portion of their revenue, and thus reduce these proud Democratic sovereignties to the degrading position of looking to the Treasury of the United States for their means of support. In the language of General Jackson, "a more direct road to consolidation cannot be devised." Such a state of dependence, though exactly in accordance with the centralizing Whig policy, has ever been abhorred by the Democrats. But the Distribution Bill is one of the principles, one of the "convictions," of General Scott; and so let it pass.

We come now to the Bankrupt Bill, a purely Whig measure, to which General Scott gives his adhesion.—And such a bill! In no legitimate sense of the word, was this a bankrupt law. It was merely a new mode of paying old debts; and the easiest mode which was ever devised for this purpose in any civilized country. The expansions and contractions of the Bank of the United States,—the inundations of bank paper and of shiplasters which spread over the country, had given birth to a wild and reckless spirit of speculation, that ruined a great number of people. The speculators wanted to pay their debts in the easiest manner, and the Whigs wanted their votes. This was the origin of the bankrupt law. It ruined a great many honest creditors; it paid off a great many honest debts with moonshine. If my memory serves me, debts to the amount of \$400,000,000 were discharged in this manner. The law, however, from its practical operation, soon became so odious to the people, that they demanded its repeal. It was stricken from the statute book, amidst the execrations of the people, by the very same Congress which had enacted it, in one year and one month from the day on which it went into effect. And this is the bill for which General Scott declares he would have voted, had he been a member of Congress.

Next in order, we come to the Bank of the United States. If General Scott "had had the honor of a vote, it would have been given for the second bill creating a Fiscal Corporation."

Surely the General could never have carefully read this bill. In derision, it was termed at the time, the "Kite Flying Fiscality." It was a mere speculators' bank, and no person believed it could ever become a law. In truth, it was got up merely for the purpose of heading John Tyler, and when reported to the House, it was received, according to the *National Intelligencer*, with shouts of laughter.

It originated in this manner. A bill had at first passed Congress to create a regular old-fashioned Bank of the United States. This bill was vetoed by John Tyler. Afterwards the second bill, or Kite Flying Fiscality, was prepared by the Whigs to meet some portions of Mr. Tyler's veto message, and

if possible render it ridiculous. The bill was passed and was vetoed by President Tyler, as everybody foresaw it would be. But how General Scott got his head so befogged as to prefer this thing to the first bill, is a matter of wonder. I venture to say he was the only Whig in the United States who held the same opinion.

This closes General Scott's confession of Whig faith; and surely it is sufficiently ample and specific to gratify the most rabid Whig in the land. But the General had another string to his bow. It was necessary not only that he should be as good a Whig as Henry Clay, but that he should be something besides, something over and above a mere Whig, in order to render himself more available than his great rival. Hence the concluding head of his famous epistle, which, like the postscript of a lady's letter, contains much of the pith and marrow of the whole. It is entitled "Secret or Oath-bound Societies." In it he declares, although a Mason, that he had "not been a member of a Masonic lodge for thirty odd years, nor a visitor of any lodge since, except one,—now more than sixteen years ago." And such is his abhorrence for secret societies, that for twenty-eight years he had not even visited one of those literary societies in our colleges, whose practice it is to adopt a few secret signs by which their members in after life can recognize each other.

In order, then, to render himself a more available candidate than Henry Clay, it was necessary that his net should have a broader sweep than that of the great Kentuckian. It was necessary that he should be as good a Whig and a far better Anti-Mason. The Anti-Masonic party was then powerful in Pennsylvania as well as in other Northern States. This party numbered in its ranks many old Democrats, and to these Mr. Clay was not very acceptable. The Anti-Masons were more active and more energetic than the Whigs. A distinguished Anti-Mason of our State is reported once to have said, that they were the locomotive, and the Whigs the burden train. How were they to be enlisted in the ranks of Scott? The great Kentuckian, with that independent spirit which characterized him, never yielded to the advances of the Anti-Masons. He was a Mason himself as well as General Scott; but the General lent a far more kindly ear to this new party. Hence his remarks on secret or oath-bound societies. This confession of his faith proved to be entirely satisfactory; and the Anti-Masons have ever since proved to be his devoted friends. He thus captured a large division of the forces which were unfriendly to Mr. Clay. But for the purpose of embracing the new recruits, it became necessary to coin a more comprehensive name than simply that of Whigs.

He doubtless thought that a rose by any other name would smell as sweet. Hence, in his famous letter, he announced himself to be a Democratic Whig. A white blackbird—a Christian unbeliever. This name was sufficiently comprehensive to embrace all men of all parties. He became all things to all men, that he might gain proselytes. I say what I know, when I declare that this letter, and attempt to supplant the veteran statesman of Kentucky, was a subject of severe criticism at the time in Washington city, among men of all

parties. Surely, in the language of Thurlow Weed, "there is weakness in all he says or does about the Presidency."

But a good general is always fertile in expedients. His coup-d'oeil embraces the whole field of battle, and he is ever ready to take advantage of any occurrence which may enable him to seize the victory. A new political party styling itself the Native American party, began to loom up in an imposing manner and to present a formidable aspect. This party must be conciliated. The Native Americans must be prevailed upon to unite their forces with the Whigs and Anti-Masons, and thus to form a grand combined army. It therefore became necessary for General Scott to write a second epistle, which he seems to have done with all the ardor and enthusiasm of heartfelt sincerity. This is dated from Washington city, on the 10th of November, 1844, and is in answer to a letter addressed to him, "in behalf of several hundred Native American Republicans," by Geo. W. Reed, Esq., of Philadelphia. This second epistle proved to be as successful in enlisting the Native Americans under his banner, as the first epistle had been in enlisting the Anti-Masons. And why should it not? The General pledged himself, in the strongest terms, to every dogma which this new party had most at heart.

He dates his Native Americanism back more than eight years, to "the stormy election in the spring of 1836," and his views "were confirmed in the week [Nov. 1840] when Harrison electors were chosen in New York." It was on this occasion in 1840, that, "fired with indignation," he sat down with two friends in the Astor House, "to draw up an address, designed to rally an American party." What has become of this address? How precious would it be? I fear it is forever lost to the world! It would be one of the greatest curiosities of modern literature. How withering must have been its attack upon the poor foreigners! We can judge somewhat of its spirit by his epistle to Mr. Reed. Other Native Americans were satisfied to restore the naturalization law of "the reign of terror," and to prohibit foreigners from becoming citizens until after a residence of fourteen years. Not so with General Scott. He went a bow-shot beyond. His mind inclined to "a total repeal of all Acts of Congress on the subject,"—to a total denial forever of all political rights to every human being, young, middle-aged, and old, who had happened to be born in a foreign country.

Having thus placed himself *rectus in curia*, as the lawyers would say, with the Native American party, he then proceeds, as their god-father, to give them a proper name. In this I do not think his choice was fortunate. It was a difficult task. It must embrace within its ample outline both Whigs and Anti-Masons, and yet have so much of the odor of Native Americanism as to make its savor sweet in the nostrils of the new party. He says, "I should prefer assuming the designation of American Republicans, as in New York, or Democratic Americans, as I would respectfully suggest. Democratic Americans would include all good native American citizens devoted to our country and its institutions; and would not drive from us naturalized citizens, who, by long residence, have become identified with us in feelings and interest."

“Democratic Americans!” What a name for a Native American party! When all the records of our past history prove that American Democrats have ever opened wide their arms to receive foreigners flying from oppression in their native land, and have always bestowed upon them the rights of American citizens, after a brief period of residence in this country. The Democratic party have always gloried in this policy, and its fruits have been to increase our population and our power with unexampled rapidity, and to furnish our country with vast numbers of industrious, patriotic and useful citizens. Surely the name of ‘Democratic Americans’ was an unfortunate designation for the Native American party!

But General Scott was not content to be considered merely as a proselyte to Native Americanism. He claimed the glory of being the founder of the party. He asserts his claim to this distinguished honor, which no individual will now dispute with him, in the postscript to his letter of November, 1844, which was read on the 4th of February, 1847, before the National Convention of Native American Delegates, at Pittsburg. In this he says, “writing, however, a few days ago, to my friend Mayor Harper of New York, I half jocosely said, that I should claim over him and others the foundership of the new party, but that I had discovered this glory, like every other American excellence, belonged to the Father of his Country.”

The Native American party an ‘American excellence,’ and the glory of its foundership, belongs to George Washington! No, fellow-citizens, the American people will rise up with one accord to vindicate the memory of that illustrious man from such an imputation. As long as the recent memory of our revolutionary struggle remained vividly impressed on the hearts of our countrymen, no such party could have ever existed. The recollection of Montgomery, Lafayette, De Kalb, Kosciusko, and a long list of foreigners, both officers and soldiers, who freely shed their blood to secure our liberties, would have rendered such ingratitude impossible. Our revolutionary army was filled with the brave and patriotic natives of other lands, and George Washington was their commander-in-chief. Would he have ever closed the door against the admission of foreigners to the rights of American citizens? Let his acts speak for themselves. So early as the 26th of March, 1790, General Washington, as President of the United States approved the first law which ever passed Congress on the subject of naturalization; and this only required a residence of two years, previous to the adoption of a foreigner as an American citizen. On the 29th January, 1795, the term of residence was extended by Congress to five years, and thus it remained throughout General Washington’s administration, and until after the accession of John Adams to the Presidency. In his administration, which will ever be known in history as the reign of terror, as the era of alien and sedition laws, an act was passed on the 18th of June, 1798, which prohibited any foreigner from becoming a citizen until after a residence of fourteen years, and this is the law, or else perpetual exclusion, which General Scott preferred, and which the Native American party now desire to restore.

The Presidential election of 1800 secured the ascendancy of the Democratic party, and under the administration of Thomas Jefferson, its great apostle, on the 14th of April, 1802, the term of residence previous to naturalization was restored to five years, what it had been under General Washington, and where it has ever since remained. No, fellow-citizens, the Father of his Country was never a 'Native American.' This 'American excellence' never belonged to him."

General Scott appears to have been literally infatuated with the beauties of Native Americanism. On the 12th November, 1848, he addressed a letter in answer to one from a certain "Mr. Hector Orr, printer," who appears to have been the editor of a Native American journal in Philadelphia. This letter is a perfect rhapsody from beginning to end. Among other things equally extravagant, the General says: "A letter from him (Benjamin Franklin) were he alive, could not have refreshed me more than that before my eyes. It gives a new value to any little good I have done or attempted, and will stimulate me to do all that may fall in the scope of my power in the remainder of my life." What a letter must this have been of Mr. Hector Orr, printer! What a pity it has been lost to the world! The General concluded by requesting Mr. Orr to send him "the history of the Native party by the Sunday School Boy," and also to consider him a subscriber to his journal.

But soon there came a frost—a chilling frost. Presto, pass, and General Scott's Native Americanism is gone like the baseless fabric of a vision. Would that it left no trace behind! The celebrated William E. Robinson, of New York, is the enchanter who removes the spell.

The Whig National Convention of 7th June, 1848, was about to assemble. General Scott was for the third time about to be a candidate before it for nomination as President. This was an important—a critical moment. Native Americanism had not performed its early promise. It was not esteemed "an American excellence," even by the Whig party. General Scott was in a dilemma, and how to extricate himself from it was the question. The ready friendship of Mr. Robinson hit upon the lucky expedient. On the 8th May, 1848, he addressed a letter to General Scott, assuming that the General entertained "kind and liberal views towards our naturalized citizens." The General answered this letter on the 29th May, 1848, just ten days before the meeting of the Whig Philadelphia Convention; and what an answer! After declaring in the strongest terms that Mr. Robinson had done him no more than justice in attributing to him "kind and liberal views toward our naturalized citizens," he proceeds: "It is true that in a case of unusual excitement some years ago, when both parties complained of fraudulent practices in the naturalization of foreigners, and when there seemed to be danger that native and adopted citizens would be permanently arrayed against each other in hostile faction, *I was inclined to concur in the opinion then avowed by leading statesmen, that some modification of the naturalization laws might be necessary*, in order to prevent abuses, allay strife and restore harmony between the different classes of our people. But later experience

and reflection have entirely removed this impression, and dissipated my apprehensions."

The man who had warmly embraced Native Americanism so early as 1836, and had given it his enthusiastic support for twelve years thereafter—who next to Washington had claimed to be the founder of this "American excellence;" who, "fired with indignation," had in conjunction with two friends in 1840, prepared an address in his parlor at the Astor House in New York, designed to rally an American party; who had, in 1844, hesitated between extending the period of residence before naturalization to fourteen years, and a total and absolute exclusion of all foreigners from the rights of citizenship forever, his mind inclining to the latter; who had in the same year elevated Hector Orr, the Native American printer, to the same level with our great revolutionary statesman and patriot, Benjamin Franklin—this same individual, in 1848, declares to Mr. Robinson, that he had formerly been merely "*inclined to concur in the opinion then avowed by leading statesmen*, that some modification of the naturalization laws might be necessary."

"Oh! what a fall was there, my countrymen!"

And what caused this sudden, this almost miraculous change of opinion? Why, forsooth, in his recent campaign in Mexico, the Irish and the Germans had fought bravely in maintaining our flag in the face of every danger. But had they not fought with equal bravery throughout our revolutionary struggle, and throughout our last war with Great Britain? General Scott could not possibly have been ignorant of this fact. Chippewa and Lundy's Lane both attest their gallant daring in defence of the stars and stripes of our country.

The General now seems determined, if possible, to efface from the memory of man that he had ever been a Native American. His present devotion to our fellow-citizens of foreign birth knows no bounds. He is determined to enlist them under his banner, as he formerly enlisted the Anti-Masons and Native Americans.

Official business, it seems, required him to visit the Blue Licks of Kentucky; but yet, it is passing strange, that he chose to proceed from Washington to that place by the circuitous route of the great Northern Lakes. This deviation from a direct military line between the point of his departure and that of his destination has enabled him to meet and address his fellow-citizens on the way, at Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and other points both in Pennsylvania and Ohio. Should the published programme of his route be carried into effect, he will, on his return to Washington from the Blue Licks, pass through Buffalo, and throughout the entire length of the Empire State. Nobody, however, can for a single moment suspect—this would be uncharitable—that his visit to the small and insignificant States of Pennsylvania, Ohio and New York, when merely on his way from Washington city to Kentucky, could at this particular period have had any view to the Presidential election! Far be it from me to indulge such a suspicion; and yet it is strange that General Scott, throughout his whole route, speaks and acts just as General Scott would have done had he been on an electioneering tour. He has everywhere



bestowed especial favor upon our adopted fellow-citizens; but at Cleveland he surpassed himself, and broke out into a rhapsody nearly as violent as that in which he had indulged in favor of Hector Orr, the Native American printer. At Cleveland, an honest Irishman in the crowd shouted a welcome to General Scott. Always ready to seize the propitious moment, the General instantly exclaimed: "I hear that rich brogue; I love to hear it. It makes me remember noble deeds of Irishmen, many of whom I have led to battle and to victory." The General has yet to learn that my father's countrymen, (I have ever felt proud of my descent from an Irishman,) though they sometimes do blarney others, are yet hard to be blarneyed themselves, especially out of their Democracy. The General, unless I am greatly mistaken, will discover that Irish Democrats, however much, in common with us all, they may admire his military exploits, will never abandon their political principles, and desert their party, for the sake of elevating him or any other Whig candidate to the Presidency.

One other remark:—Were it within the limits of possibility to imagine, which it is not, that our Washingtons, our Jeffersons, or our Jacksons, could have set out on an electioneering tour for themselves, when candidates for the Presidency,—I ask, would they have met and addressed their fellow-citizens on such topics, and in such a style, as General Scott has selected? No! friends and fellow-citizens, gravity, solemnity, and the discussion of great questions of public policy, affecting the vital interests of the country, would have illustrated and marked their progress.

General Scott, in his political opinions, is prone to extremes. Not content with having renounced Native Americanism, not satisfied to occupy the broad, just and liberal platform in favor of naturalization, on which the Democratic party have stood, ever since the origin of the Government, he leaves this far behind. In his letter, accepting the nomination of the Whig Convention, he declares himself in favor of such an alteration in our naturalization laws, as would admit foreigners to the rights of citizenship, who, in time of war, had served a single year in the army or navy. This manifests a strange, an unaccountable ignorance of the Federal Constitution. Did he not know that the power of Congress was confined to the establishment of "an uniform rule of naturalization?" "Uniform" is the word. Congress have no power to make exceptions in favor of any class of foreigners; no power to enact that one man shall be naturalized after a residence of a single year, and that another shall reside five years before he can attain this privilege. What uniformity would there be in requiring five years residence from the honest and industrious foreigner, who remains usefully employed at home, and in dispensing with this requisition in favor of the foreigner who has enlisted and served for one year in the army or navy? General Scott, in order to accomplish his object, must resort to a fourth amendment of the Constitution. He would make this sacred instrument a mere nose of wax, to be twisted, and turned, and bent in any direction which the opinion or caprice of the moment might dictate.

After this review, I ask you, fellow-citizens, what confidence can be reposed in the political opinions of General Scott? Is there anything in them of that firm, stable, consistent and enlightened character which ought to distinguish the man into whose hands you are willing to entrust the civil destinies of our great, glorious and progressive country? What security have our adopted citizens that he may not to-morrow relapse into Native Americanism? For twelve long years, and this, too, at a period of life when the judgment ought to be mature, he remained faithful and true to the Native American party; giving it all the encouragement and support which his high character and influence could command; and he only deserted it in 1848, at the approach of the Whig National Convention. And what opinion must the Native Americans hold of the man, who, after having been so long one of their most ardent and enthusiastic leaders, abandoned them at the time of their utmost need? Above all, does Winfield Scott possess that calm and unerring judgment, that far-seeing sagacity, and that prudence, never to be thrown off its guard, which we ought to require in a President of the United States?

That General Scott is a great military man, the people of this country will ever gratefully and cheerfully acknowledge. History teaches us, however, that but few men, whose profession has been arms and arms alone from early youth, have possessed the civil qualifications necessary wisely to govern a free people. Of this we have had some experience in the case of General Taylor, who was both an honest man and a pure patriot; but like General Scott, had always been a soldier and nothing but a soldier. It is true that a few favored mortals, emancipating themselves from the military fetters by which they had been bound, have displayed high talents as statesmen. Napoleon Bonaparte is the most remarkable example of this class; but his statesmanship was unfortunately displayed in the skill with which he forged fetters for his country.

As an American citizen, proud of the military exploits of General Scott, I wish from my soul he had never become a candidate for the Presidency. The defects in his character as a statesman, which it has now become an imperative duty to present to the people of the country, would then have been forgotten and forever buried in oblivion. But for this, he would have gone down to posterity without a cloud upon his glory. And, even now, it is fortunate for his future fame, as well as for the best interests of his country, that he can never be elected President of the United States.

A few words on the subject of General Scott's connection with the Free Soilers, and I shall have done. And in the first place, let me say that I do not believe, and therefore shall not assert, that he is himself a Free Soiler. On the contrary, I freely admit we have satisfactory proof, that whilst the Compromise Measures were pending before Congress and afterwards, he expressed his approbation of them, but this only in private conversations among his friends. But was this all the country had a right to expect from General Scott?

The dark and portentous cloud raised by the Abolitionists and fanatics,

which had for many years been growing blacker and still blacker, at length seemed ready to burst upon our devoted heads, threatening to sweep away both the Constitution and the Union. The patriots of the land, both Whigs and Democrats, cordially united their efforts to avert the impending storm. At this crisis, it became the duty of every friend of the Union to proclaim his opinions boldly. This was not a moment for any patriot to envelop himself in mystery. Under such appalling circumstances, did it comport with the frankness of a soldier, for General Scott to remain silent; or merely to whisper his opinions to private friends from the South? A man of his elevated station and commanding influence ought to have thrown himself into the breach. But the Presidency was in view; and he was anxious to secure the votes of the Free Soil Whigs of the Seward school, in the National Convention. Mr. Fillmore, his competitor, had spoken out like a man in favor of the Compromise, and had thus done his duty to his country. He was, for this very reason, rejected by the Whig National Convention, and General Scott was nominated by the votes and influence of the Northern Free Soil Whigs.

But the Northern Free Soilers had not quite sufficient strength to secure his nomination. To render this certain, it was necessary to enlist a small detachment of Southern Whig delegates. This task was easily accomplished. To attain his object, General Scott had merely to write a brief note to Mr. Archer.

This was evidently not intended for the public eye, certainly not for the Free Soilers. It was, therefore, most reluctantly extracted from the breeches pocket of John M. Botts, and was read to the Convention, as we are informed, amid uproarious laughter. In this note, General Scott, with characteristic inconsistency, whilst declaring his determination to write nothing to the Convention, or any of its individual members, at this very moment, in the same note, does actually write to Mr. Archer, a member of the Convention, that should the honor of a nomination fall to his lot, he would give his views on the Compromise Measures in terms at least as strong in their favor, as those which he had read to Mr. Archer himself but two days before. This pledge which, on its face, was intended exclusively for Governor Jones, Mr. Botts, and Mr. Lee, etc., all of them Southern Whigs, proved sufficient to detach a small division of this wing of the party from Mr. Fillmore, and these, uniting with the whole body of the Northern Free Soilers, succeeded in nominating General Scott. After the nomination had been thus made, the General immediately proceeded to accept it, "with the resolutions annexed;" and one of these resolutions is in favor of the faithful execution of all the measures of the Compromise, including the Fugitive Slave Law.

Now, fellow-citizens, I view the finality of the Compromise as necessary to the peace and preservation of the Union. I say finality; a word aptly coined for the occasion. The Fugitive Slave Law is all the South have obtained in this Compromise. It is a law founded both upon the letter and the spirit of the Constitution; and a similar law has existed on our statute book ever since the administration of George Washington. History teaches us that but

for the provision in favor of the restoration of fugitive slaves, our present Constitution never would have existed. Think ye that the South will ever tamely surrender the Fugitive Slave Law to Northern fanatics and Abolitionists?

After all, then, the great political question to be decided by the people of the country is, will the election of Scott, or the election of Pierce, contribute most to maintain the finality of the Compromise and the peace and harmony of the Union?

Scott's Northern supporters spit upon and execrate the platform erected by the Whig National Convention. They support General Scott, not because of their adherence to this platform, but in spite of it. They have loudly expressed their determination to agitate the repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law, and thus bring back upon the country the dangerous excitement which preceded its passage. They will not suffer the country to enjoy peace and repose, nor permit the Southern States to manage their own domestic affairs, in their own way, without foreign interference.

Who can doubt that these dangerous men will participate largely in the counsels of General Scott, and influence the measures of his administration? To them he owes his election, should he be elected. He is bound to them by the ties of gratitude. He is placed in a position where he would be more or less than a man, if he could withdraw himself from their influence. Indeed, he has informed us in advance, in the very act of accepting the nomination, that he would seek to cultivate harmony and fraternal sentiment throughout the Whig party, without attempting to reduce its numbers by proscription to exact conformity to his own views. What does this mean, if not to declare that the Free Soil Whigs of the North, and the Compromise Whigs of the South, shall share equally in the honors and offices of the Administration? In the North, where by far the greatest danger of agitation exists, the offices will be bestowed upon those Whigs who detest the Compromise, and who will exert all the influence which office confers, to abolish the Fugitive Slave Law. To this sad dilemma has General Scott been reduced.

On the other hand, what will be our condition should General Pierce be elected? He will owe his election to the great Democratic party of the country,—a party truly national, which knows no North, no South, no East, and no West. They are everywhere devoted to the Constitution and the Union. They everywhere speak the same language. The finality of the Compromise, in all its parts, is everywhere an article of their political faith. Their candidate, General Pierce, has always openly avowed his sentiments on this subject.

He could proudly declare, in accepting the nomination, that there has been no word nor act of his life in conflict with the platform adopted by the Democratic National Convention. Should he be elected, all the power and influence of his administration will be exerted to allay the dangerous spirit of fanaticism, and to render the Union and the Constitution immortal. Judge ye, then, between the two candidates, and decide for yourselves.

And now, fellow-citizens, what a glorious party the Democratic party has ever been! Man is but the being of a summer's day, whilst principles are eternal. The generations of mortals, one after the other, rise and sink and are forgotten; but the principles of Democracy, which we have inherited from our revolutionary fathers, will endure to bless mankind throughout all generations. Is there any Democrat within the sound of my voice—is there any Democrat throughout the broad limits of good and great old Democratic Pennsylvania, who will abandon these sacred principles for the sake of following in the train of a military conqueror, and shouting for the hero of Lundy's Lane, Cerro Gordo, and Chapultepec?

“Remember, O my friends! the laws, the rights,  
The gen'rous plan of power deliver'd down,  
From age to age, by your renown'd forefathers,  
So dearly bought, the price of so much blood;  
O! Let it never perish in your hands,  
But piously transmit it to your children.”

## CHAPTER III.

1852—1853.

PERSONAL AND POLITICAL RELATIONS WITH THE PRESIDENT ELECT AND WITH MR. MARCY, HIS SECRETARY OF STATE—BUCHANAN IS OFFERED THE MISSION TO ENGLAND—HIS OWN ACCOUNT OF THE OFFER, AND HIS REASONS FOR ACCEPTING IT—PARTING WITH HIS FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS IN LANCASTER—CORRESPONDENCE WITH HIS NIECE.

THE private correspondence between Mr. Buchanan and the new President, General Pierce, and his Secretary of State, will best explain his relations to this administration; and he has himself left a full record of the circumstances under which he accepted the mission to England in the summer of 1853.

[FROM GENERAL PIERCE.]

CONCORD, N. H., November 1, 1852.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Your kind letter of the 26th instant was received yesterday.

Your conclusion as to attending the meeting at Tammany Hall was what I should have expected, marked by a nice sense of the fitness of things.

The telegraphic despatches received late this evening would seem to remove all doubt as to the result of the election. Your signal part in the accomplishment of that result is acknowledged and appreciated by all. I hope to have the pleasure of meeting you at no distant day.

Your friend,

FRANK PIERCE.

[FROM GENERAL PIERCE.]

CONCORD, N. H., December 7, 1852.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have been hoping ever since the election that I might have a personal interview with you, if not before, certainly during the present month. But the objections to such a meeting suggested by you while I was at the seashore now exist, perhaps even with greater force than at that time. With

our known pleasant personal relation a meeting would doubtless call forth many idle and annoying speculations and groundless surmises.

An interchange of thoughts with Colonel King (whose returning health is a source of great joy to me) would also be peculiarly pleasant and profitable, but here, again, there are obstacles in the way. He cannot come North, and I cannot go to Washington. Communication by letter is still open. My thoughts for the last four weeks have been earnestly turned to the formation of a cabinet. And although I must in the end be responsible for the appointments, and consequently should follow my own well-considered convictions, I cannot help saying often to myself how agreeable it would be to compare conclusions upon this or that point with Mr. Buchanan. I do not mean to trouble you with the many matters of difficulty that evidently lie in my path. So far as I have been able to form an opinion as to public sentiment and reasonable public expectation, I think I am expected to call around me gentlemen who have not hitherto occupied cabinet position, and in view of the jealousies and embarrassments which environ any other course, this expectation is in accordance with my own judgment, a judgment strengthened by the impression that it is sanctioned by views expressed by you. Regarding you with the confidence of a friend, and appreciating your disinterested patriotism as well as your wide experience and comprehensive statesmanship, I trust you will deem it neither an intrusion nor annoyance when I ask your suggestions and advice.

If not mistaken in this, you will confer a great favor by writing me, as fully as you may deem proper, as to the launching (if I may so express myself) of the incoming administration, and more especially in regard to men and things in Pennsylvania. In relation to appointments requiring prompt action after the inauguration, I shall, as far as practicable, leave Concord with purposes definitely formed, and not likely to be changed.

Should you deem that I ought not thus to tax you, burn the letter, but give me, as of yore, your good will and wishes.

I shall regard, as you will of course, whatever passes between us as in the strictest sense confidential.

Very truly, your friend,

FRANK PIERCE.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO GENERAL PIERCE.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, December 11, 1852.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Your favor of the 7th instant reached me last evening.

You do me no more than justice in "regarding me with the free confidence of a friend," and I can say in all sincerity that, both for your own sake and that of the country, I most ardently desire the success of your administration. Having asked my suggestions and advice "as to the launching of the incoming administration," I shall cheerfully give it, with all the frankness of friendship.

Your letter, I can assure you, has relieved me from no little personal anxiety. Had you offered me a seat in your cabinet one month ago, although highly gratified as I should have been with such a distinguished token of your confidence and regard, I would have declined it without a moment's hesitation. Nothing short of an imperative and overruling sense of public duty could ever prevail upon me to pass another four years of my life in the laborious and responsible position which I formerly occupied. Within the past month, however, so many urgent appeals have been made to me from quarters entitled to the highest respect, to accept the State Department, if tendered, and this, too, as an act of public duty, in view of the present perplexed and embarrassing condition of our foreign relations, that in declining it, I should have been placed in an embarrassing position from which I have been happily relieved by your letter.

But whilst I say this in all sincerity, I cannot assent to the correctness of the general principle you have adopted, to proscribe in advance the members of all former cabinets; nor do I concur with you in opinion, that either public sentiment or public expectation requires such a sweeping ostracism. I need scarcely, therefore, say that the impression which you have derived of my opinion in favor of this measure, from I know not whom, is without foundation. I should be most unjust towards my able, enlightened and patriotic associates in the cabinet of Mr. Polk, could I have entertained such an idea. So far from it that, were I the President elect, I should deem it almost indispensable to avail myself of the sound wisdom and experienced judgment of one or more members of that cabinet, to assist me in conducting the vast and complicated machinery of the Federal Government. Neither should I be diverted from this purpose by the senseless cry of "Old Fogyism" raised by "Young America."

I think the members of Mr. Polk's cabinet should be placed upon the same level with the mass of their fellow-citizens, and neither in a better nor a worse condition. I am not aware that any of them, unless it may be Governor Marcy, either expects or desires a cabinet appointment; and certainly all of them will most cheerfully accord to you the perfect right of selecting the members of your own cabinet. Still, to be excluded from your consideration, merely because they had happened to belong to Mr. Polk's cabinet, could not be very gratifying to any of them.

To apply your own metaphor, "the launching of the incoming administration" will, perhaps, be a more important and responsible duty than has ever fallen to the lot of any of your predecessors. On the selection of the navigators to assist you in conducting the vessel of State, will mainly depend the success of the voyage. No matter how able or skilful the commander may be, and without flattery, I cheerfully accord to you both ability and skill, he can do but little without the aid of able and skilful subordinates. So firmly am I convinced of this truth, that I should not fear to predict the result of your administration as soon as I shall learn who are the members of your cabinet. In former times, when the Government was comparatively in



its infancy, the President himself could supervise and direct all the measures of any importance arising under our complex but most excellent system of government. Not so at present. This would no longer be possible, even if the day consisted of forty-eight instead of twenty-four hours. Hence, from absolute necessity, the members of your administration will exercise much independent power. Even in regard to those questions submitted more directly to yourself, from want of time to make minute examinations of all the facts, you must necessarily rely much upon the representations of the appropriate Secretary. My strong and earnest advice to you, therefore, is not to constitute your cabinet with a view to harmonize the opposite and fleeting factions of the day ; but solely with the higher and nobler view of promoting the great interests of the country and securing the glory and lasting fame of your own administration. You occupy a proud and independent position, and enjoy a popularity which will render any able and honest Democrat popular who may be honored by your choice for a cabinet station, provided they are properly distributed over the Union. In this respect, you are placed in a more enviable position than almost any of your predecessors. It was a maxim of old Simon Snyder, the shrewd and popular Governor of our State, that the very best man ought to be selected for the office, and if not popular at the moment, he would soon render himself popular. In view of these important considerations, I would earnestly recommend to you the practice of General Washington, never finally to decide an important question until the moment which required its decision had nearly approached.

I know that a state of suspense is annoying to the human mind ; but it is better to submit to this annoyance for a season than to incur the risk of a more permanent and greater evil.

You say that you will leave Concord "with purposes definitely formed and not likely to be changed."

But is Concord the best locality in the world for acquiring reliable information and taking extended views of our whole great country ? To Boston I should never resort for this purpose. Pardon me for suggesting that you ought not to have your resolution definitely fixed until after your arrival in Washington. In that city, although you will find many interested and designing politicians, there are also pure, honest and disinterested Democratic patriots.

Among this number is Colonel King, whom you so highly and justly commend. He is among the best, purest and most consistent public men I have ever known, and is also a sound judging and discreet counsellor. You might rely with implicit confidence upon his information, especially in regard to the Southern States, which I know are at the present moment tremblingly alive to the importance of your cabinet selections. I might cite the example of Mr. Polk. Although in council with General Jackson, he had early determined to offer me the State Department, yet no intimation of the kind was ever communicated to me until a short time before his arrival in Washington, and then only in an indirect manner ; and in regard to all the other members of his

cabinet, he was wholly uncommitted, until the time for making his selections had nearly approached.

It is true, he had strong predilections in favor of individuals before he left Tennessee, but I do not think I hazard much in saying, that had these been indulged, his administration would not have occupied so high a place as it is destined to do in the history of his country.

One opinion I must not fail to express; and this is that *the cabinet ought to be a unit*. I may say that this is not merely an opinion of mine, but a strong and deep conviction. It is as clear to my mind as any mathematical demonstration. Without unity no cabinet can be successful. General Jackson, penetrating as he was, did not discover this truth until compelled to dissolve his first cabinet on account of its heterogeneous and discordant materials. I undertake to predict that whoever may be the President, if he disregards this principle in the formation of his cabinet, he will have committed a fatal mistake. He who attempts to conciliate opposing factions by placing ardent and embittered representatives of each in his cabinet, will discover that he has only infused into these factions new vigor and power for mischief. Having other objects in view, distinct from the success and glory of the administration, they will be employed in strengthening the factions to which they belong, and in creating unfortunate divisions in Congress and throughout the country. It was a regard to this vital principle of unity in the formation of his cabinet which rendered Mr. Polk's administration so successful. We were all personal and political friends, and worked together in harmony. However various our views might have been and often were upon any particular subject when entering the cabinet council, after mutual consultation and free discussion we never failed to agree at last, except on a very few questions, and on these the world never knew that we had differed.

I have made these suggestions without a single selfish object. My purpose is to retire gradually, if possible, and gracefully from any active participation in public affairs, and to devote my time to do historical justice to the administration of Mr. Polk, as well as to myself, before the tribunal of posterity. I feel, notwithstanding, a deep and intense interest in the lasting triumph of the good old cause of Democracy and in that of its chosen standard bearer, to whose success I devoted myself with a hearty good will.

The important domestic questions being now nearly all settled, the foreign affairs of the Government, and especially the question of Cuba, will occupy the most conspicuous place in your administration. I believe Cuba can be acquired by cession upon honorable terms, and I should not desire to acquire it in any other manner. The President who shall accomplish this object will render his name illustrious, and place it on the same level with that of his great predecessor, who gave Louisiana to the Union. The best means of acquiring it, in my opinion, is to enlist the active agency of the foreign creditors of Spain, who have a direct interest in its cession to the United States. The Rothschilds, the Barings, and other large capitalists now control, to a great extent, the monarchies of continental Europe. Besides, Queen Christina,

who is very avaricious and exercises great influence over her daughter, the queen of Spain, and her court, has very large possessions in the island, the value of which would be greatly enhanced by its cession to the United States. Should you desire to acquire Cuba, the choice of suitable ministers to Spain, Naples, England and France will be very important. Mr. Fillmore committed a great outrage in publishing the Cuban correspondence. Had he, however, not suppressed a material portion of my instructions to Mr. Saunders, every candid man of all parties would have admitted, without hesitation, that under the then existing circumstances it was the imperative duty of Mr. Polk to offer to make the purchase. Indeed, I think myself, it was too long delayed.

In my opinion, Mr. Clayton and Mr. Webster have involved our relations with England in serious difficulties by departing from the Monroe doctrine.

In Pennsylvania we have all been amused at the successive detachments of those whom we call guerillas, which have visited Concord to assure you that serious divisions exist among the Democracy of our State. There never was anything more unfounded. The party is now more thoroughly united than it has ever been at any period within my recollection. Whilst the contest continued between General Cass and myself, many honest Democrats, without a particle of personal or political hostility to me, preferred him and espoused his cause simply because he had been the defeated candidate. That feeling is at an end with the cause which gave it birth, and these honest Democrats as heartily despise the ———, the ———, the ———, the ———, the ———, the ———, etc., etc., as do my oldest and best friends. In truth the guerillas are now chiefs without followers. They are at present attempting to galvanize themselves at home through the expected influence of your administration. Their tools, who will nearly all be applicants for office, circulate the most favorable accounts from Concord. They were scarcely heard of previous to the October election, which was the battle of the 23d December; but if we are to believe them, they achieved the victory of the 8th January. These are the men who defeated Judge ——— at the election in October, 1851, by exciting Anti-Catholic prejudices against him, and who have always been disorganizers whenever their personal interests came in conflict with the success of the party. Thank Heaven, they are now altogether powerless, and will so remain unless your administration should impart to them renewed vigor. Their principal apprehension was that you might offer me a seat in your cabinet, but for some time past they have confidently boasted that their influence had already prevented this dreaded consummation.

Their next assault will be upon my intimate friend, Judge ———, who will, I have no doubt, be strongly presented to you for a cabinet appointment. The Judge is able, honest and inflexibly firm, and did, to say the very least, as much as any individual in the State to secure our glorious triumph. I might speak in similar terms of ———. To defeat such men, they will lay hold of ———, Mr. ———, or any other individual less obnoxious to them, and make a merit of pressing him for a cabinet appointment from Pennsylvania.

They calculate largely upon the influence of General Cass, who, strangely enough, is devoted to them, although their advocacy rendered it impossible that he should ever be nominated or elected by the vote of the State.

As a private citizen, I shall take the liberty of recommending to you by letter, at the proper time, those whom I consider the best qualified candidates for different offices within our State, and you will pay such attention to my recommendations as you may think they deserve. I would not, if I could, exclude the honest friends of General Cass from a fair participation. . . . . They are and always have been good Democrats, and are now my warm friends. But I shall ever protest against the appointment of any of the disorganizers who, professing Democracy, defeated Judge ———, and not content with advocating General Cass in preference to myself, which they had a perfect right to do, have spent their time and their money in abusing my personal character most foully and falsely.

Even ———, the editor of the ———, whose paper was almost exclusively devoted to the propagation of these slanders, to be circulated under the frank of Senator ——— throughout the South, for they had no influence at home, is a hopeful candidate for office, as they profess, under your administration.

I have now, from a sense of duty, written you by far the longest letter I ever wrote in my life, and have unburdened my mind of a ponderous load. I have nothing more to add, except a request that you would present me kindly to Mrs. Pierce, and believe me to be always, most respectfully,

Your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[GENERAL PIERCE TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

CONCORD, N. H., December 14, 1852.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Language fails me to express the sincere gratitude I feel for your kind and noble letter of the 11th inst. I cannot now reply as I ought, but lose no time in expressing my deep sense of obligation. I ought, in justice to the citizens of Pennsylvania who have visited Concord during the summer and autumn, to say that I do not recollect a single individual who has ventured to make a suggestion in relation to yourself, calculated in the slightest degree to weaken my personal regard.

It is far from my purpose to hasten to any conclusion in relation to my cabinet.

It is hardly possible that I can be more deeply impressed than I now am as to the importance of the manner in which it shall be cast, both for the interests of the country and my own comfort. I cannot, however, view the advantages of my presence at Washington in the same light with yourself, though having no object but the best interests of our party and the country;

personal inclination and convenience will, if I know it, have no weight upon my course in any particular.

I must leave for a future time many things I desire to say. Do you still anticipate passing a portion of the winter at the South?

With sincere regard, your friend,

FRANK PIERCE.

[MARCY TO BUCHANAN.]

WASHINGTON, March 5, 1853.

MY DEAR SIR:—

If not a matter of strict duty, I choose to regard it as a proper thing to explain my movements to you. A few days after the late Presidential election, I went south with my son Edmund, about whose condition as to health I had become alarmed, and am still very solicitous. In the first week of February, he took a steamer for some of the West India Islands, and I concluded it to be my duty to return to my deserted family at Albany. I arrived at Richmond, Virginia, about the 20th of February, with a disposition to pass on to the North without going through Washington. As I had never done anything at that place for which I ought to be ashamed (or rather I thought I had not), it appeared to me it would be cowardly to run around or through it. I was very much inclined to go and perchance to stop there a few days. The doubts which distracted me in regard to my course were almost entirely removed by a letter from a person whom I had never seen, suggesting that it might be well for me to be in Washington about the 20th ult. On my appearance there a rumor suddenly arose that I was certainly to be one of the new cabinet, and the same liberty was taken with the names of several other persons. I have heard in an unauthentic way that you had been wise enough to take precautions against such a use of your name. It is now generally believed here, and I believe it myself, that I may be in the cabinet of the incoming administration, and (to confess all) I have been weak enough to make up my mind to accept a seat if offered one in it. Should it be the place you filled with so much ability, I may be rash enough not to decline it. I have told you all; here I am and here I am likely to be, for a brief period at least.

I do not think you will approve of what I have done. I hope you will not severely censure me, or the judgment which will put me where I expect to be. If it is an error, either on my part or that of another, there are some circumstances to excuse it, but I have not time to present them in detail.

I hope to have a frank and free intercourse with you. I will go further, I hope to have—what I know I shall much need—the aid in some emergencies of your greater experience and better knowledge. It will give me sincere pleasure to hear from you.

Yours truly,

W. L. MARCY.

On the 30th of March (1853), the President wrote to Mr. Buchanan and requested him to accept the mission to England. In his reply, Mr. Buchanan postponed a final answer, and what ensued appears from the following detailed account, which remains in his hand-writing.

Although gratified with this offer, I felt great reluctance in accepting it. Having consulted several friends, in whose judgment I have confidence, they all advised me to accept it, with a single exception (James L. Reynolds). I left Lancaster for Washington on Thursday, 7th April, wholly undecided as to my course. On Friday morning (8th April) I called upon the President, who invited me to dine with him "*en famille*" that day. The only strangers at the table were Mr. John Slidell and Mr. O'Connor. After the dinner was over the President invited me up to the library, where we held the following conversation :

I commenced by expressing to him my warm and grateful acknowledgments for the offer of this most important mission, and said I should feel myself under the same obligations to him whether it was accepted or declined ; that at my age, and contented and happy as I was at home, I felt no disposition to change my position, and again to subject myself to the ceremonious etiquette and round of gaiety required from a minister at a foreign court.

Here the President interrupted me and said : " If this had been my only purpose in sending you abroad, I should never have offered you the mission. You know very well that we have several important questions to settle with England, and it is my intention that you shall settle them all in London. The country expects and requires your services as minister to London. You have had no competitor for this place, and when I presented your name to the cabinet they were unanimous. I think that under these circumstances I have a right to ask you to accept the mission."

To this I replied that Mr. Polk was a wise man, and after deliberation he had determined that all important questions with foreign nations should be settled in Washington, under his own immediate supervision ; that he (President Pierce) had not, perhaps, seriously considered the question.

He promptly replied that he had seriously considered the question, and had arrived at the conclusion that better terms could be obtained in London at the seat of power than through an intermediate agent in this country ; and instanced the Oregon negotiation as an example.

From this opinion I did not dissent, but asked : " What will Governor Marcy say to your determination ? You have appointed him Secretary of State with my entire approbation ; and I do not think he would be willing to surrender to your minister at London the settlement of these important questions, which might reflect so much honor upon himself."

He replied, with some apparent feeling, that he himself would control this matter.

I interposed and said: "I know that you do; but I would not become the instrument of creating any unpleasant feelings between yourself and your Secretary of State by accepting the mission, even if I desired it, which is not the case."

He replied that he did not believe this would be the case. When he had mentioned my name to the cabinet, although he did not say in express terms I should be entrusted with the settlement of these questions, yet from the general tone of his remarks they must have inferred that such was his intention. He added, that after our interview he would address a note to Governor Marcy to call and see him, and after conversing with him on the subject he would send for me.

I then mentioned to him that there appeared to me to be another insurmountable obstacle to my acceptance of the mission. I said: "In all your appointments for Pennsylvania, you have not yet selected a single individual for any office for which I recommended him. I have numerous other friends still behind who are applicants for foreign appointments; and if I were now to accept the mission to London, they might with justice say that I had appropriated the lion's share to myself, and selfishly received it as an equivalent for their disappointment. I could not and would not place myself in this position."

His answer was emphatic. He said: "I can assure you, if you accept the mission, Pennsylvania shall not receive one appointment more or less on that account. I shall consider yours as an appointment for the whole country; and I will not say that Pennsylvania shall not have more in case of your acceptance than if you should decline the mission." I asked him if he was willing I should mention this conversation publicly. He said he would rather not; but that I might give the strongest assurances to my friends that such would be his course in regard to Pennsylvania appointments.

We then had a conversation respecting the individual appointments already made in Pennsylvania, which I shall not write. He told me emphatically, that when he appointed Mr. Brown collector, he believed him to be my friend, and had received assurances to that effect; although he knew that I greatly preferred Governor Porter. He also had been assured that Wynkoop was my friend, and asked if I had not recommended him; and seemed much surprised when I informed him of the course he had pursued.

I then stated, that if I should accept the mission, I could not consent to banish myself from my country for more than two years. He replied, that at the end of two years I might write to him for leave to return home, and it should be granted; adding, that if I should settle our important questions with England at an earlier period, I might return at the end of eighteen months, should I desire it.

The interview ended, and I heard nothing from the President on Friday evening, Saturday or Sunday, or until Monday morning. In the mean time,

I had several conversations with particular friends, and especially with Mr. Walker (at whose house I stayed), Judge Campbell and Senator Bright, all of whom urged me to accept the mission. The latter informed me that if I did not accept it, many would attribute my refusal to a fear or an unwillingness to grapple with the important and dangerous questions pending between the United States and Great Britain.

On Sunday morning, April 10th, the *Washington Union* was brought to Mr. Walker's, from which it appeared that the session of the Senate would terminate on the next day at one o'clock, the President having informed the Committee to wait upon him, that he had no further communications to make to the body. At this I was gratified. I presumed that the President, after having consulted Governor Marcy, had concluded not to transfer the negotiations to London; because it had never occurred to me that I was to go abroad on such an important mission without the confirmation of the Senate. Mr. Walker and myself had some conversation on the subject, and we agreed that it was strange the Senate had been kept so long together without submitting to them the important foreign appointments; as we both knew that in Europe, and especially in England, since the rejection of Mr. Van Buren's appointment, a minister had not the proper prestige without the approbation of the co-ordinate branch of the Executive power.

On Sunday morning, before dinner-time, I called to see Jefferson Davis.\* We had much conversation on many subjects. Among other things, I told him it was strange that the foreign appointments had not been agreed upon and submitted to the Senate before their adjournment. He replied that he did not see that this could make any difference; they might be made with more deliberation during the recess. I said a man was considered but half a minister, who went abroad upon the President's appointment alone, without the consent of the Senate, ever since the rejection of Mr. Van Buren. He said he now saw this plainly; and asked why Marcy had not informed them of it,—they trusted to him in all such matters. The conversation then turned upon other subjects; but this interview with Mr. Davis, sought for the purpose of benefiting my friend, John Slidell, who was then a candidate for the Senate, has doubtless been the cause why I was nominated and confirmed as minister to England on the next day.

On Sunday evening a friend informed Mr. Walker and myself that a private message had been sent to the Senators still in town, requesting them not to leave by the cars on Monday morning, as the President had important business to submit to them. This was undoubtedly the origin of the rumor which at the time so extensively prevailed, that the cabinet was about to be dissolved and another appointed.

On Monday morning, at ten o'clock, I received a note from Mr. Cushing,† informing me that "the President would be glad to see me at once." I immediately repaired to the White House; and the President and myself

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\* Mr. Davis was Secretary of War.

† Attorney General.



agreed, referring to our former conversation, though not repeating it in detail, that he should send my name to the Senate. If a quorum were present, and I should be confirmed, I would go to England; if not, the matter was to be considered as ended. Thirty-three members were present, and I was confirmed. On this second occasion, our brief conversation was of the same character, so far as it proceeded, with that at our first interview. He kindly consented that I should select my own Secretary of Legation; and without a moment's hesitation, I chose John Appleton, of Maine, who accepted the offer which I was authorized to make, and was appointed. I left Washington on Tuesday morning, April 12th.

At our last interview, I informed the President that I would soon again return to Washington to prepare myself for the performance of my important duties, because this could only be satisfactorily done in the State Department. He said he wished to be more at leisure on my return, that he might converse with me freely on the questions involved in my mission; he thought that in about ten days the great pressure for office would relax, and he would address me a note inviting me to come.

I left Washington perfectly satisfied, and resolved to use my best efforts to accomplish the objects of my mission. The time fixed upon for leaving the country was the 20th of June, so that I might relieve Mr. Ingersoll on the 1st of July.

I had given James Keenan of Greensburg a strong recommendation for appointment as consul to Glasgow. As soon as he learned my appointment as minister to England, he wrote to me on the 14th of April, stating that the announcement of my acceptance of this mission had created a belief among my friends there that no Pennsylvanian could now be appointed to any consulship.

On the 16th of April, I wrote to him and assured him, in the language of the President, that my appointment to the English mission would not cause one appointment more or one appointment less to be given to Pennsylvania than if I had declined the mission.

In answer, I received a letter from him, dated April 21st, in which he extracts from a letter from Mr. Drum, then in Washington, to him, the following: "I have talked to the President earnestly on the subject (of his appointment to Glasgow), but evidently without making much impression. He says that it will be impossible for him to bestow important consulships on Pennsylvania who has a cabinet officer and *the first and highest mission*. Campbell talks in the same strain; but says he will make it his business to get something worthy of your acceptance."

For some days before and after the receipt of this letter, I learned that different members of the cabinet, when urged for consulates for Pennsylvanians, had declared to the applicants and their friends that they could not be appointed *on account of my appointment to London*, and what the President had already done for the State. One notable instance of this kind occurred between Colonel Forney and Mr. Cushing. Not having heard from the President, according to his promise, I determined to go to Washington for the

purpose of having an explanation with him and preparing myself for my mission. Accordingly, I left home on Tuesday, May 17th, and arrived in Washington on Wednesday morning, May 18th, remaining there until Tuesday morning, May 31st, on which day I returned home.

On Thursday morning, May 19th, I met the President, by appointment, at 9½ o'clock. Although he did not make a very clear explanation of his conversation with Mr. Drum, yet I left him satisfied that he would perform his promise in regard to Pennsylvania appointments. I had not been in Washington many days before I clearly discovered that the President and cabinet were intent upon his renomination and re-election. This I concluded from the general tendency of affairs, as well as from special communications to that effect from friends whom I shall not name. It was easy to perceive that the object in appointments was to raise up a Pierce party, wholly distinct from the former Buchanan, Cass, and Douglas parties; and I readily perceived, what I had before conjectured, the reason why my recommendations had proved of so little avail. I thought I also discovered considerable jealousy of Governor Marcy, who will probably cherish until the day of his death the anxious desire to become President. I was convinced of this jealousy at a dinner given Mr. Holmes, formerly of South Carolina, now of California, at Brown's Hotel on Saturday, May 21st. Among the guests were Governor Marcy, Jefferson Davis, Mr. Dobbin, and Mr. Cushing. The company soon got into high good humor. In the course of the evening Mr. Davis began to jest with Governor Marcy and myself on the subject of the next Presidency, and the Governor appeared to relish the subject. After considerable *bagatelle*, I said I would make a speech. All wanted to hear my speech. I addressed Governor Marcy and said: "You and I ought to consider ourselves out of the list of candidates. We are both growing old, and it is a melancholy spectacle to see old men struggling in the political arena for the honors and offices of this world, as though it were to be their everlasting abode. Should you perform your duties as Secretary of State to the satisfaction of the country during the present Presidential term, and should I perform my duties in the same manner as minister to England, we ought both to be content to retire and leave the field to younger men. President Pierce is a young man, and should his administration prove to be advantageous to the country and honorable to himself, as I trust it will, there is no good reason why he should not be renominated and re-elected for a second term." The Governor, to do him justice, appeared to take these remarks kindly and in good part, and said he was agreed. They were evidently very gratifying to Messrs. Davis, Dobbin, and Cushing. Besides, they expressed the real sentiments of my heart. When the dinner was ended, Messrs. Davis and Dobbin took my right and left arm and conducted me to my lodgings, expressing warm approbation of what I had said to Governor Marcy. I heard of this speech several times whilst I remained at Washington; and the President once alluded to it with evident satisfaction. It is certain that Governor Marcy is no favorite.

I found the State Department in a wretched condition. Everything had

been left by Mr. Webster topsy turvy ; and Mr. Everett was not Secretary long enough to have it put in proper order ; and whilst in that position he was constantly occupied with pressing and important business. Governor Marcy told me that he had not been able, since his appointment, to devote one single hour together to his proper official duties. His time had been constantly taken up with office-seekers and cabinet councils. It is certain that during Mr. Polk's administration he had paid but little attention to our foreign affairs ; and it is equally certain that he went into the Department without much knowledge of its appropriate duties. But he is a strong-minded and clear-headed man ; and, although slow in his perceptions, is sound in his judgment. He may, and I trust will, succeed ; but yet he has much to learn.

Soon after I arrived in Washington on this visit, I began seriously to doubt whether the President would eventually entrust to me the settlement of the important questions at London, according to his promise, without which I should not have consented to go abroad. I discovered that the customary and necessary notice in such cases had not been given to the British government, of the President's intention and desire to transfer the negotiations to London, and that I would go there with instructions and authority to settle all the questions between the two governments, and thus prepare them for the opening of these negotiations upon my arrival.

After I had been in Washington some days, busily engaged in the State Department in preparing myself for the duties of my mission, Mr. Marcy showed me the project of a treaty which had nearly been completed by Mr. Everett and Mr. Crampton, the British minister, before Mr. Fillmore's term had expired, creating reciprocal free trade in certain enumerated articles, between the United States and the British North American provinces, with the exception of Newfoundland, and regulating the fisheries. Mr. Marcy appeared anxious to conclude this treaty, though he did not say so in terms. He said that Mr. Crampton urged its conclusion ; and he himself apprehended that if it were not concluded speedily, there would be great danger of collision between the two countries on the fishing grounds. I might have answered, but did not, that the treaty could not be ratified until after the meeting of the Senate in December ; and that in the mean time it might be concluded at London in connection with the Central American questions. I did say that the great lever which would force the British government to do us justice in Central America was their anxious desire to obtain reciprocal free trade for their North American possessions, and thus preserve their allegiance and ward off the danger of their annexation to the United States. My communications on the extent and character of my mission were with the President himself, and not with Governor Marcy ; and I was determined they should so remain. The President had informed me that he had, as he promised, conversed with the Governor, and found him entirely willing that I should have the settlement of the important questions at London.

The circumstances to which I have referred appeared to me to be significant. I conversed with the President fully and freely on each of the three

questions, viz: The reciprocal trade, the fisheries, and that of Central America; and endeavored to convince him of the necessity of settling them all together. He seemed to be strongly impressed with my remarks, and said that he had conversed with a Senator then in Washington, (I presume Mr. Toucey, though he did not mention the name,) who had informed him that he thought that the Senate would have great difficulty in ratifying any treaty which did not embrace all the subjects pending between us and England; and that for this very reason there had been considerable opposition in the body to the ratification of the Claims Convention, though in itself unexceptionable.

The President said nothing from which an inference could be fairly drawn that he had changed his mind as to the place where the negotiation should be conducted; and yet he did not speak in as strong and unequivocal terms on the subject as I could have desired. Under all the circumstances, I left Washington, on the 31st of May, without accepting my commission, which had been prepared for me and was in the State Department. On the 5th of June I received a letter from Governor Marcy, dated on the first, requesting me to put on paper my exposition of the Clayton and Bulwer treaty. In this he says nothing about my instructions on any of the questions between this country and England, nor does he intimate that he desires my opinion for any particular purpose. On the 7th of June I answered his letter. In the concluding portion of my letter, I took the occasion to say: "The truth is that our relations with England are in a critical condition. Throw all the questions together into hotchpot, and I think they can all be settled amicably and honorably. The desire of Great Britain to establish free trade between the United States and her North American possessions, and by this means retain these possessions in their allegiance, may be used as the powerful lever to force her to abandon her pretensions in Central America; and yet it must be admitted that, in her history, she has never voluntarily abandoned any important commercial position on which she has once planted her foot. It cannot be her interest to go to war with us, and she must know that it is clearly her interest to settle all the questions between us, and have a smooth sea hereafter. If the Central American question, which is the dangerous question, should not be settled, we shall probably have war with England before the close of the present administration. Should she persist in her unjust and grasping policy on the North American continent and the adjacent islands, this will be inevitable at some future day; and although we are not very well prepared for it at the present moment, it is not probable that we shall for many years be in a better condition."

I also say in this letter to Governor Marcy, that "bad as the treaty (the Clayton and Bulwer treaty) is, the President cannot annul it. This would be beyond his power, and the attempt would startle the whole world. In one respect it may be employed to great advantage. The question of the Colony of the Bay of Islands is the dangerous question. It affects the national honor. From all the consideration I can give the subject, the establishment of this Colony is a clear violation of the Clayton and Bulwer treaty. Under

it we can insist upon the withdrawal of Great Britain from the Bay of Islands. Without it we could only interpose the Monroe doctrine against this colony, which has never yet been sanctioned by Congress, though as an individual citizen of the United States, I would fight for it to-morrow, so far as all North America is concerned, and would do my best to maintain it throughout South America."

This letter of mine to Governor Marcy, up till the present moment, June 25, has elicited no response. It may be seen at length in this book.

Having at length determined to ascertain what were the President's present intentions in regard to the character of my mission, I addressed him a letter, of which the following is a copy, on the 14th June.

[TO HIS EXCELLENCY, FRANKLIN PIERCE.]

(Private.)

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, June 14, 1853.

MY DEAR SIR :—

I have this moment received yours of the 11th instant, and now enclose you Mr. Appleton's resignation. I cannot imagine how I neglected to do this before. It will be very difficult to supply his place.

If you have changed your mind in regard to the place where our important negotiations with England shall be conducted, you would confer a great favor upon me by informing me of this immediately. I stated to you, in our first conversation on the subject, that Mr. Polk, after due deliberation, had determined that such negotiations should be conducted under his own eye at Washington; and it would not give me the slightest uneasiness to learn, that upon reconsideration, such had become your determination. I should, however, consider it a fatal policy to divide the questions. After a careful examination and study of all these questions, and their mutual bearings upon each other and upon the interest of the two countries, I am fully convinced that they can only be satisfactorily adjusted all together. Indeed, from what you said to me of your conversation with a Senator, and from what I have since learned, I believe it would be difficult to obtain the consent of two-thirds of the Senate to any partial treaty. The South, whether correctly or not, will probably be averse to a reciprocity treaty confined to the British North American possessions; and it would be easy for hostile demagogues to proclaim, however unjustly, that the interests of the South had been bartered away for the fisheries. But the South might and probably would be reconciled to such a treaty, if it embraced a final and satisfactory adjustment of the questions in Central America.

If you have changed your mind, and I can imagine many reasons for this, independently of the pressure of the British minister to secure that which is so highly prized by his government,—then, I would respectfully suggest that you might inform Mr. Crampton, you are ready and willing to negotiate upon the subject of the fisheries and reciprocal trade; *but this in connection with our Central American difficulties*;—that you desire to put an end to all the

embarrassing and dangerous questions between the two governments, and thus best promote the most friendly relations hereafter;—and that you will proceed immediately with the negotiation and bring it to as speedy a conclusion as possible, whenever he shall have received the necessary instructions. Indeed, the treaty in regard to reciprocal trade and the fisheries might, in the mean time, be perfected, with a distinct understanding, however, that its final execution should be postponed until the Central American questions had been adjusted. In that event, as I informed you when at Washington, if you should so desire, I shall be most cordially willing to go there as a private individual, and render you all the assistance in my power. I know as well as I live, that it would be vain for me to go to London to settle a question peculiarly distasteful to the British government, after they had obtained, at Washington, that which they so ardently desire.

I write this actuated solely by a desire to serve your administration and the country. I shall not be mortified, in the slightest degree, should you determine to settle all the questions in Washington. Whether [you do so] or not, your administration shall not have a better friend in the country than myself, nor one more ardently desirous of its success; and I can render it far more essential service as a private citizen at home than as a minister to London.

With my kindest regards for Mrs. Pierce, and Mrs. Means,

I remain, very respectfully, your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

P. S.—I should esteem it a personal favor to hear from you as soon as may be convenient.

From the important character of this letter and the earnest and reiterated request which I made for an early answer, I did not doubt but that I should receive one, giving me definite information, with as little delay as possible. I waited in vain until the 23d June; and having previously ascertained, through a friend, that my letter had been received by the President, I wrote him a second letter on that day, of which the following is a copy.

[TO HIS EXCELLENCY, FRANKLIN PIERCE.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, June 23, 1853.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Not having yet been honored with an answer to my letter of the 14th inst., I infer from your silence, as well as from what I observe in the public journals, that you have finally changed your original purpose and determined that our important negotiations with England shall be conducted under your own eye at Washington, and not in London. Anxious to relieve you from all embarrassment upon the subject, I desire to express my cordial concurrence in such an arrangement, if it has been made; and I do this without waiting

longer for your answer, as the day is now near at hand which was named for my departure from the country.\* Many strong reasons, I have no doubt, exist, to render this change of purpose entirely proper and most beneficial for the public interest. I am not at all surprised at it, having suggested to you, when we conversed upon the subject, that Mr. Polk, who was an able and a wise man, had determined that our important negotiations with foreign powers, so far as this was possible, should be conducted at Washington, by the Secretary of State, under his own immediate supervision. With such a change I shall be altogether satisfied, nay, personally gratified; because it will produce a corresponding change in my determination to accept the English mission.

I never had the vanity to imagine that there were not many Democratic statesmen in the country who could settle our pending questions with England quite as ably and successfully as myself; and it was, therefore, solely your own voluntary and powerful appeal to me to undertake the task which could have overcome my strong repugnance to go abroad. Indeed, when I stated to you how irksome it would be for me, at my period of life and with my taste for retirement, again for the second time to pass through the routine and submit to the etiquette necessary in representing my country at a foreign court, you kindly remarked that you were so well convinced of this that you would never have offered me the mission had it not been for your deliberate determination that the negotiations on the grave and important questions between the two countries should be conducted by myself at London, under your instructions; observing that, in your opinion, better terms could be obtained for our country at the fountain of power than through the intermediate channel of the British minister at Washington.

At any time a foreign mission would be distasteful to me; but peculiar reasons of a private and domestic character existed at the time I agreed to accept the British mission, and still exist, which could only have yielded to the striking view you presented of the high public duty which required me to undertake the settlement of these important questions. You will, therefore, be kind enough to permit me, in case your enlightened judgment has arrived at the conclusion that Washington, and not London, ought to be the seat of the negotiations, most respectfully to decline the mission. For this you have doubtless been prepared by my letter of the 14th instant.

With my deep and grateful acknowledgments for the high honor you intended for me, and my ardent and sincere wishes for the success and glory of your administration and for your own individual health, prosperity and happiness, I remain, very respectfully,

Your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

To this letter I received an answer on Tuesday evening, June 28th, of which the following is a copy:

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\* 9th July.

[PRESIDENT PIERCE TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

WASHINGTON, D. C., June 26th, 1853.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I was much surprised by the perusal of your letter of the 23d inst., received this morning. I had seen no letter from you since that to which I replied on the 11th inst., and was mortified that through a mistake of my own, and from no neglect of my private secretary, it had been misplaced from a large mail of the 17th, with one or two other letters, and had thus entirely escaped my notice. The motives which led me to desire your acceptance of the mission to England were fully stated, first, I think, in my note addressed to you at Wheatland, and subsequently in our interview. The general views which were expressed by me at that interview as to the relative advantages of conducting the negotiations here or at London has undergone no change. Still, the present condition of affairs with respect to the fisheries and the various questions connected therewith has seemed to demand that they be taken up where Mr. Crampton and Mr. Everett left them. Recent developments have inspired the belief that the fisheries, the reciprocity question, etc. will leave no ground of concession which could be available in the settlement of the questions in Central America. The threatening aspect of affairs on the coast in the provinces has of necessity called for several conversations between Mr. Crampton and the Secretary of State, with a view to keep things quiet there, and, if practicable, to agree upon terms of a satisfactory adjustment. To suspend these negotiations at this moment, in the critical condition of our interests in that quarter, might, I fear, prove embarrassing, if not hazardous. That a treaty can be, or had better be, concluded here, I am not prepared to say. I have no wish upon the subject except that the negotiations be conducted wherever they can be brought to the most speedy and advantageous termination. The great respect for your judgment, experience, high attainments and eminent abilities, which led me to tender to you the mission to England, will induce me to commit to your hands all the pending questions between the two countries, unless the reasons for proceeding here with those to which I have referred, shall appear quite obvious. I need not say that your declination at this time would be embarrassing to me, and for many reasons a matter to be deeply regretted.

I thank you for your generous expressions, and assure you that your heart acknowledges no feeling of personal kindness to which mine does not respond. If the tax be not too great, will you oblige me by visiting Washington again? I trust a comparison of conclusions, with the facts before us, may conduct to a result mutually satisfactory.

With the highest respect, your friend,

FRANKLIN PIERCE.



[MR. BUCHANAN TO PRESIDENT PIERCE.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, June 29th, 1853.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Your favor of the 26th inst. did not reach Lancaster until yesterday afternoon. I had thought it strange that you did not answer my letter of the 14th instant; but this accidental omission has been kindly and satisfactorily explained by your favor of the 26th.

It is, perhaps, scarcely necessary for me to repeat my unchanged purpose to accept the English mission and go to London without delay, if it be still your determination to intrust me with the settlement of the reciprocity, the fishery and the Central American questions. I confess, however, that I do not perceive how it is now possible, employing your own language, "to suspend negotiations (in Washington) at this moment" on the reciprocity and fishery questions. I agree with you that it was quite natural that the negotiations "should be taken up at once, where Mr. Crampton and Mr. Everett left them." This could only have been prevented by an official communication to Mr. Crampton, upon offering to renew the negotiation, informing him of the fact that you had appointed me minister to London for the very purpose of settling these, as well as the Central American, questions.

In regard to our Central American difficulties, I still entertain, after more mature reflection, the most decided opinions—I might even say convictions. Whilst these difficulties are all embarrassing, one of them is attended with extreme danger. I refer to the establishment by Great Britain of the Colony of the Bay of Islands. This wrong has been perpetrated, if I understand the question, in direct violation of the Clayton and Bulwer treaty. Our national honor imperatively requires the removal of this colony. Its withdrawal ought to be a *sine qua non* in any negotiation on any subject with the British government. With what face could we ever hereafter present this question of violated faith and outraged national honor to the world against the British government, if whilst, *flagrante delicto*, the wrong unexplained and undressed, we should incorporate the British North American provinces, by treaty, into the American Union, so far as reciprocal free trade is concerned? How could we, then, under any circumstances, make this a *casus belli*? If a man has wronged and insulted me, and I take him into my family and bestow upon him the privileges of one of its members, without previous redress or explanation, it is then too late to turn round and make the original offence a serious cause for personal hostilities. It is the first step which costs; and this ought to be taken with a clear view of all the consequences. If I were placed in your exalted and well merited station, my motto should be, "all the questions or none." This is the best, nay, perhaps the only mode of satisfactorily adjusting our difficulties with that haughty, overreaching and imperious government. My sole object in agreeing to accept a mission, so distasteful to me in all other respects, was to try the experiment, under your instructions,

well knowing that I should receive from you a firm and enlightened support. I still cherish the confident belief we should have proved successful. It would now seem to be too late to transfer the negotiation to London; but you may still insist that *all* the questions shall be settled together in Washington. They still remain there just as they were in Mr. Fillmore's time. Why, then, should Mr. Crampton have received instructions in two of them, and not in the third?

But I have said and written so much to yourself and Governor Marcy upon the danger of dividing these questions, that I shall only add that, were I a Senator, I could not in conscience vote for the ratification of any partial treaty in the present condition of our relations with Great Britain. And here I would beg respectfully to make a suggestion which, if approved by you, might remove all difficulties. Let Governor Marcy and Mr. Crampton arrange the reciprocity and fishery questions as speedily as possible; and then let me carry the perfected projet with me to London, to be executed there, provided I shall succeed in adjusting the Central American questions according to your instructions; but in no other event. In this manner the reciprocity question, as arranged by the Secretary of State, might still be used as the powerful lever to force a just settlement of the Central American questions. Indeed, in communicating your purpose in this respect to Mr. Crampton, Governor Marcy might address him a note which would essentially assist me in the Central American negotiation. As the reciprocity and fishery treaty would not be submitted to the Senate until December, this arrangement would be productive of no delay.

I should cheerfully visit Washington, or go a thousand miles to serve you in any manner, but I doubt whether this would be good policy under existing circumstances. The public journals would at once announce that I had arrived in Washington to receive my commission and instructions, and depart for Europe. Finding this not to be the case, they would presume that some misunderstanding had occurred between you and myself, which prevented me from going abroad. Is it not better to avoid such suspicions? If I should not go to England, a brief explanation can be made in the *Union* which will put all right, and the whole matter will be forgotten in a week. After all, however, should you still wish me to go to Washington, please to have me telegraphed, because the mail is almost always two, and sometimes three days in reaching me.

In regard to myself personally, if the expedient which I have suggested should not be adopted, or something similar to it, then I should have no business of importance to transact in London, and should, against all my tastes and inclinations, again subject myself to the ceremonies, etiquette and round of gaiety required from a minister at a foreign court. But this is not all. I should violate my private and social duties towards an only brother, in very delicate health, and numerous young relatives, some of whom are entirely dependent upon me and now at a critical period of life, without the self-justification of having any important public duties to perform. So reluctant

was I, at the first, to undertake the task which, in your kindness, you had prescribed for me, that my mind was not finally made up, until a distinguished Senator bluntly informed me, that if I shrank from it, this would be attributed to a fear of grappling with the important and dangerous questions with England which had been assigned to me, both by the voice of the President and the country.

I regret that I have not time, before the closing of the mail, to reduce my letter to any reasonable dimensions.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

Wednesday, July 6th, at about 6 o'clock in the afternoon, Mr. Mann, the son of the Assistant Secretary of State, arrives and presents me with a private letter from Governor Marcy dated on the day previous, and a sealed package which, upon opening, I found contained my commission and instructions as minister to Great Britain, without the slightest reference to the previous correspondence on the subject between the President and myself, and just as though I had accepted, instead of having declined the mission, and was now on the wing for London! He was to find me wherever I might be. He left about sunset or between that and dark. *Vide* Governor Marcy's letter, on page 30.

Thursday morning, July 7, the following letter from the President came to hand, postmarked Washington, July 4th.

[PIERCE TO BUCHANAN.]

WASHINGTON, July 2, 1853.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Your letter of the 29th ultimo was received this morning, and I have carefully considered its suggestions. The state of the questions now under discussion between Mr. Crampton and Governor Marcy cannot with a proper regard for the public interest, be suspended. It is not to be disguised that the condition of things on the coast is extremely embarrassing, so much so as to be the source of daily solicitude. Nothing, it is to be feared, but the prospect of a speedy adjustment will prevent actual collision. Mr. Crampton has become so deeply impressed with the hazard of any ill-advised step on either side that he left this morning with the view of having a personal interview with Sir George Seymour. Thus, while I am not prepared to say that a treaty can be concluded here, or that it will prove desirable upon the whole that it should be, it is quite clear to my mind that the negotiations ought not to be broken off; and that, with a proper regard to our interests, the announcement cannot be made to Mr. Crampton that the final adjustment of the fishery question must await the settlement of the Central American questions. Believing that the instructions now prepared would present my views in relation to the mission in the most satisfactory manner, they will be forwarded to you

to-morrow. I need not repeat the deep regret your declination would occasion on my part. What explanation could be given for it, I am unable to perceive.

I am, with the highest respect,

Truly your friend,

FRANKLIN PIERCE.

[BUCHANAN TO PIERCE.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, July 7, 1853.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Yours of the 2d inst., postmarked on the 4th, did not reach me until this morning at too late an hour to prepare and send an answer to Lancaster in time for the southern mail. Young Mr. Mann arrived and left last evening, a *most decided contre-temps*. Had your letter preceded him, this would have saved me some labor, and, although a very placid man, some irritation.

Although the opinions and purposes expressed in my letters of the 14th, 23d and 29th ultimo remain unchanged, yet so great is my personal desire to gratify your wishes that I shall take the question under reconsideration for a brief period, I observe from the papers that you will be in Philadelphia, where I anticipate the pleasure of paying you my respects. Then, if not sooner, I shall give your letter a definite answer.

I hope that in the meantime you may look out for some better man to take my place. You may rest assured I can manifest my warm friendship for your administration and for yourself far more effectively as a private citizen of Pennsylvania than as a public minister in London.

From your friend,

Very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MARCY TO BUCHANAN.]

(Private.)

STATE DEPARTMENT, }  
WASHINGTON, July 5, 1853. }

MY DEAR SIR:—

I expected you would be again in Washington before you left for England, but as this is uncertain, I have concluded to send by the bearer, Mr. W. G. C. Mann, the instructions which have been prepared for you. I have preferred to send them in this way lest they should not reach you in season if entrusted to the mail.

I should have been pleased with an opportunity of submitting them to you, and having the benefit of any suggestions you might make thereon; but I shall not have it, as you will not probably be here before your departure on your mission. The instructions have been carefully examined by the President, and made conformable to his views. Should there be other documents

than those now sent, which it would be proper for you to take out, they will be forwarded to our despatch agent at New York, and by him handed to you.

Very respectfully your obedient servant,

W. L. MARCY.

On Monday evening, July 11, 1853, I went to Philadelphia to meet the President, according to my appointment. I saw him on Tuesday afternoon at the head of the military procession, as it marched from Market Street down Sixth to Independence Hall. He was on the right of General Patterson, and being a good horseman, he appeared to much advantage on horseback. He recognized me, as he rode along, at the window of the second story of Lebo's Commercial Hotel.

The reception of the President in Philadelphia was all that his best friends could have desired. Indeed, the Whigs seemed to vie with the Democrats in doing honor to the Chief Magistrate. Price Wetherell, the President of the Select Council, did his whole duty, though in a fussy manner, and was much gratified with the well-deserved compliments which he received. The dinner at McKibbins' was excellent and well conducted. We did not sit down to table until nearly nine o'clock. The mayor, Mr. Gilpin, presided. The President sat on his right, and myself on his left. In the course of the entertainment he spoke to me, behind Mr. Gilpin, and strongly expressed the hope that I would accept the mission, to which I made a friendly, but indefinite answer. He then expressed a desire to see me when the dinner should be ended; but it was kept up until nearly midnight, the President cordially participating in the hilarity of the scene. We then agreed to meet the next morning.

After mature reflection, I had determined to reject the mission, if I found this could be done without danger of an open breach with the administration; but if this could not be done, I was resolved to accept it, however disagreeable. The advice of Governor Porter, then at McKibbins', gave me confidence in the correctness of my own judgment. My position was awkward and embarrassing. There was danger that it might be said (indeed it had already been insinuated in several public journals), that I had selfishly thrown up the mission, because the fishery question had not been entrusted to me, although I knew that actual collision between the two countries on the fishery grounds might be the consequence of the transfer of the negotiation to London. Such a statement could only be rebutted by the publication of the correspondence between the President and myself; but as this was altogether private, such a publication could only be justified [unless] in a case of extreme necessity.

Besides, I had no reason to believe that the President had taken from me the reciprocity and fishery questions with any deliberate purpose of doing me injury. On the contrary, I have but little doubt that this proceeded from his apprehension that the suspension of the negotiation might produce dangerous consequences on the fishing grounds. I might add that his instructions to me on the Central American questions were as full and ample as I could

desire. Many friends believed, *not without reason*, that if I should decline the mission, Mr. Dallas would be appointed; and this idea was very distasteful to them, though not to myself.

The following is the substance of the conversation between the President and myself on Wednesday morning, the 13th of July, partly at McKibbins', and the remainder on board the steamer which took us across to Camden. It was interrupted by the proceedings at Independence Hall on Wednesday morning.

The President commenced the conversation by the expression of his strong wish that I would not decline the mission. I observed that the British government had imposed an absurd construction on the fishery question, and without notice had suddenly sent a fleet there to enforce it, for the purpose, as I believed, of obtaining from us the reciprocity treaty. Under these circumstances I should have said to Great Britain: You shall have the treaty, but you must consent at the same time to withdraw your protectorate from the Mosquito Coast, and restore to Honduras the colony of the Bay of Islands. That this course might still be adopted at Washington, and that in this view all the negotiations had better be conducted there. Without answering these remarks specifically, the President, reiterating his request that I should accept the mission, spoke strongly of the danger of any delay, on our part, in the adjustment of the fishery question, and said that Mr. Crampton, deeply impressed with this danger, had gone all the way to Halifax to see Admiral Seymour, for the purpose of averting this danger. I observed that it was far, very far from my desire, in the present state of the negotiation, to have charge of the fishery negotiation at London; but still insisted that it was best that the Central American questions should also be settled at Washington. To this he expressed a decided aversion. He said that serious difficulties had arisen, in the progress of the negotiations, on the reciprocity question, particularly in regard to the reciprocal registry of the vessels of the two parties; and it was probable that within a short time the negotiation on all the questions would be transferred to me at London, and that my declining the mission at this time would be very embarrassing to his administration, and could not be satisfactorily explained. I replied that I thought it could. It might be stated in the *Union* that after my agreement to accept the mission, circumstances had arisen rendering it necessary that the negotiations with which I was to be entrusted at London, should be conducted at Washington; that I myself was fully convinced of this necessity; but that this change had produced a corresponding change in my determination to accept a mission which I had always been reluctant to accept, and we had parted on the best and most friendly terms. Something like this, I thought, would be satisfactory.

He answered that after such an explanation it would be difficult, if not impossible, to get a suitable person to undertake the mission. He had felt it to be his duty to offer me this important mission, and he thought it was my duty to accept it. He said that if the Central American questions should go wrong in London, entrusted to other hands than my own, both he and I

would be seriously blamed. He said, with much apparent feeling, that he felt reluctant to insist thus upon my acceptance of a mission so distasteful to me.

Having fully ascertained, as I believed, that I could not decline the mission without giving him serious offence, and without danger of an open rupture with the administration, I said: "Reluctant as I am to accept the mission, if you think that my refusal to accept it would cause serious embarrassment to your administration, which I am anxious to support, I will waive my objections and go to London." He instantly replied that he was rejoiced that I had come to this conclusion, and that we should both feel greatly the better for having done our respective duties. He added that I need not hurry my departure. I told him that although my instructions gave me all the powers I could desire on the Central American questions, yet they had not been accompanied by any of the papers and documents in the Department relating to these questions; that these were indispensable, and without them I could not proceed. He expressed some surprise at this, and said he would write to Governor Marcy that very evening. I told him he need not trouble himself to do this, as I should write to him myself immediately after my return home.

This was on the river. I accompanied him to the cars, where I took leave of him, Mr. Guthrie, Mr. Davis and Mr. Cushing, who all pressed me very much to go on with them to New York.

[TO CITIZENS OF LANCASTER.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, July 23, 1853.

GENTLEMEN :—

I have received your very kind invitation on behalf of my friends and neighbors, to partake of a public dinner before my departure for England.

No event of my past life has afforded me greater satisfaction than this invitation, proceeding as it does, without distinction of party, from those who have known me the longest and known me the best.

Born in a neighboring county, I cast my lot among you when little more than eighteen years of age, and have now enjoyed a happy home with you for more than forty-three years, except the intervals which I have passed in the public service. During this long period I have experienced more personal kindness, both from yourselves and from your fathers, than has, perhaps, ever been extended to any other man in Pennsylvania who has taken so active a part, as I have done, in the exciting political struggles which have so peculiarly marked this portion of our history.

It was both my purpose and desire to pass the remainder of my days in kind and friendly social intercourse with the friends of my youth and of my riper years, when invited by the President of my choice, under circumstances which a sense of duty rendered irresistible, to accept the mission to London. This purpose is now postponed, not changed. It is my intention to carry

it into execution, should a kind Providence prolong my days and restore me to my native land.

I am truly sorry not to be able to accept your invitation. Such are my engagements, that I can appoint no day for the dinner when I could, with certainty, promise to attend. Besides, a farewell dinner is at best but a melancholy affair. Should I live to return, we shall then meet with joy, and should it then be your pleasure to offer me a welcome home dinner, I shall accept it with all my heart.

I cherish the confident hope that during my absence I shall live in your kindly recollection, as my friends in Lancaster County shall ever live in my grateful memory.

Cordially wishing you and yours, under the blessing of Heaven, health, prosperity and happiness, I remain

Your friend and fellow-citizen,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

Here, in regard to this English mission and other matters, Mr. Buchanan's correspondence with his niece, Miss Lane, from February to August, 1853, will show how tender and how important had now become their relations to each other.

[TO MISS LANE.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, Feb. 3, 1853.

MY DEAR HARRIET:—

I have passed the time quietly at home since I left Philadelphia, toiling night and day, to reduce the pile of letters which had accumulated during my absence. I have got nearly through and intend to pass some days in Harrisburg next week. I have literally no news to communicate to you. Miss Hetty and myself get along to a charm. She expects Miss Rebecca Parker here to-day,—the promise of Mr. Van Dyke. I hope she may come.

I received a letter yesterday from Mr. Pleasanton, dated on the 31st ultimo, from which the following is an extract:

"Clemmy wrote some two weeks ago to Miss Harriet asking her to come here and spend some time with us. As she has not heard from her, she supposes Miss Lane to be absent. Be good enough to mention this to her, and our united wish that she should spend the residue of the winter and the spring with us. There is much gaiety here now, though we do not partake of it. We will contrive, however, that Miss Lane shall participate in it."

Now do as you please about visiting Washington. I hope you are enjoying yourself in Philadelphia. Please to let me know where you have been, what you have been doing, and what you propose to do. I trust you will take good care of yourself, and always act under the influence of high moral principle and a grateful sense of your responsibility to your Creator.

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.



[FROM MISS LANE.]

PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 6, 1853.

MY DEAR UNCLE:—

I still continue to enjoy myself here, and have made many more acquaintances than I have ever had the opportunity of doing before. Lent commencing this week may in some degree affect the pleasures of society, but of that, as yet, we cannot judge. As regards Washington, I understand perfectly that, as far as you yourself are concerned, you wish me to do as I feel inclined, but your disinterested opinions are rather for a postponement of my visit; these I had quietly resolved to act upon. Should you have changed your mind or have any advice to give, let me know it at once, for rest assured I am always happier and better satisfied with myself when my actions are fully sanctioned by your wishes.

The day after you left we had an elegant dinner at Mrs. Gilpin's—many, many were the regrets that you were not present. Mr. ——— treated me with marked attention—drank wine with me first at table—talked a great deal of you, and thinks you treated him shabbily last summer by passing so near without stopping to see him. I tell you these things, as I think they show a desire on his part to meet you. ——— was there, very quiet. How I longed for you to eclipse them all, and be, as you always are, the life and soul of the dinner. Thursday Mrs. John Cadwallader's magnificent ball came off. I enjoyed it exceedingly, and was treated most kindly. James Henry received an invitation to it, but did not go. He has returned to Princeton full of studious resolves.

I found my engagements such as to make it impossible for me to go to Mrs. Tyler's last week. I arranged everything satisfactorily to all parties, and go there to stay to-morrow (Monday). Every possible kindness has been shown me by Mr. and Mrs. Plitt, and my visit to them has been delightful.

Mary Anderson remained here but a week on her return from Washington. I passed a day with them very pleasantly. . . . .

No news from Mary yet. I miss her every hour in the day, but will scarcely be able to count my loss, until I get home where I have always been accustomed to see her. I had a letter from Lizzie Porter telling me of her aunt's death. My best love to Miss Hetty. Mrs. Plitt sends her love. Hoping to hear from you very soon, believe me ever, my dear uncle,

Your sincerely affectionate

HARRIET.

[TO MISS LANE.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, March 15, 1853.

MY DEAR HARRIET:—

I received yours of the 11th, postmarked the 14th, last night. I now receive about fifty letters per day; last Saturday sixty-nine; and the cry is still they come, so that I must be brief. I labor day and night.

You ask: Will you accept the mission to England? I answer that it has not been offered, and I have not the least reason to believe, from any authentic source, that it will be offered. Indeed, I am almost certain that it will not, because surely General Pierce would not nominate me to the Senate without first asking me whether I would accept. Should the offer be made, I know not what I might conclude. Personally, I have not the least desire to go abroad as a foreign minister. But "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." I really would not know where to leave you, were I to accept a foreign mission, and this would be one serious objection.

I think you are wise in going to Mr. Macalester's. You know how much I esteem and admire Mrs. Tyler, but still a long visit to a friend is often a great bore. Never make people twice glad. I have not seen Kate Reynolds since her return, and have had no time to see any person.

In remarking as I did upon your composition, I was far from intending to convey the idea that you should write your letters as you would a formal address. Stiffness in a letter is intolerable. Its perfection is to write as you would converse. Still all this may be done with correctness. Your ideas are well expressed, and the principal fault I found was in your not making distinct periods, or full stops, as the old schoolmasters used to say. Miss ——'s are probably written with too much care,—too much precision.

We have no news. We are jogging on in the old John Trot style, and get along in great peace and harmony.

March 19, 1853.

I return you Mr. ——'s appeal, so that you may have it before you in preparing your answer. The whole matter is supremely ridiculous. I have no more reason to believe than I had when I last wrote, that I shall be offered the mission to England. Should his offer be made, it will be a matter of grave and serious consideration whether I shall accept or decline it. I have not determined this question. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Should it be accepted, it will be on the express condition that I shall have liberty to choose my own Secretary of Legation; and from the specimen of diplomacy which Mr. —— has presented, I think I may venture to say he will not be the man. I would select some able, industrious, hard working friend, in whose integrity and prudence I could place entire reliance. In fact, I have the man now in my eye, from a distant State, to whom I would make the offer—a gentleman trained by myself in the State Department. I must have a man of business, and not a carpet knight, who would go abroad to cut a dash.

Now you may say to Mr. —— that I know nothing of the intention of the President to offer me the English mission, and that you are equally ignorant whether I would accept or decline it (and this you may say with truth, for I do not know myself). If accepted, however, you presume that I would cast about among my numerous friends for the best man for the appointment; and whatever your own wishes might be, you would not

venture to interfere in the matter; that you took no part in such matters. This ought to be the substance of your letter, which you may smooth over with as many honeyed phrases as you please.

I think that a visit to Europe, with me as minister, would spoil you outright. Besides, it would consume your little independence. One grave objection to my acceptance of the mission, for which I have no personal inclination, would be your situation. I should dislike to leave you behind, in the care of any person I know. I think there is a decided improvement in your last letter. Your great fault was that your sentences ran into each other without proper periods.

Good night! I cannot say how many letters I have written to-day. Thank Heaven! to-morrow will be a day of rest. I do not now expect to visit Pittsburgh until after the first of April, though I have a pecuniary concern there of some importance.

With my kindest regards to Miss Macalester and the family, I remain, etc.

STATE DEPARTMENT, }  
WASHINGTON, May 24, 1853. }

I have received your letter, and have not written until the present moment because I did not know what to write. It is now determined that I shall leave New York on Saturday, 9th July. I cannot fix the day I shall be at home, because I am determined not to leave this until posted up thoroughly on the duties of the mission. I hope, however, I may be with you in the early part of next week. I am hard at work.

I went from Willard's to Mr. Pleasanton's last evening. Laura and Clemmie are well, and would, I have no doubt, send their love to you if they knew I was writing. I have seen but few of the fashionables, but have been overrun with visitors.

Remember me kindly to Miss Hetty and to James, and believe me to be, etc.

NEW YORK, August 4, 1853.

——— called to see me this morning, and was particularly amiable. He talked much of what his father had written and said to him respecting yourself, expressed a great desire to see you, and we talked much bagatelle about you. He intimated that his father had advised him to address you. I told him he would make a very rebellious nephew, and would be hard to manage. He asked where you would be this winter, and I told him that you would visit your relations in Virginia in the course of a month, and might probably come to London next spring or summer. He said he would certainly see you, and asked me for a letter of introduction to you, which I promised to give him. As he was leaving, he told me not to forget it, but give it to the proprietor of the Astor House before I left, and I promised to do so. I told him that you had appreciated his father's kindness to you, felt honored and gratified for his (the father's) attentions, and admired him very much. He

knew all about your pleasant intercourse with his father in Philadelphia. There was much other talk which I considered, and still consider, to be bagatelle, yet the subject was pursued by him. As I have a leisure moment, I thought I would prepare you for an interview with him, in case you should meet. — — is a man of rare abilities and great wit, and is quite eminent in his profession. His political course has been eccentric, but he still maintains his influence. I never saw him look so well as he did to-day. I repeat that I believe all this to be bagatelle; and yet it seemed to be mingled with a strong desire to see you.

Saturday Morning, August 6.

. . . . . And now, my dear Harriet, I shall go aboard the Atlantic this morning, with a firm determination to do my duty, and without any unpleasant apprehensions of the result. Relying upon that gracious Being who has protected me all my life until the present moment, and has strewed my path with blessings, I go abroad once more in the service of my country, with fair hopes of success. I shall drop you a line from Liverpool immediately upon my arrival.

With my kindest regards to Miss Hetty, I remain,

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

## CHAPTER IV.

1853—1856.

ARRIVAL IN LONDON—PRESENTATION TO THE QUEEN AT OSBORNE—  
THE MINISTRY OF LORD ABERDEEN—MR. MARCY'S CIRCULAR ABOUT  
COURT COSTUMES, AND THE DRESS QUESTION AT THE ENGLISH  
COURT—LETTERS TO MISS LANE.

THE reader has seen with what reluctance and for what special purpose Mr. Buchanan accepted the mission to England. He left New York on the 1st of August, 1853, and landed at Liverpool on the 17th, whence he wrote immediately to his niece; and I follow his first letter to her with four others, extending to the middle of October.

[TO MISS LANE.]

ADELPHI HOTEL, LIVERPOOL, August 17th, 1853.

MY DEAR HARRIET:—

I arrived in Liverpool this morning, after a passage of about ten days and sixteen hours. I was sea-sick the whole voyage, but not nearly so badly as I had anticipated, or as I was in going to and returning from Russia. Captain James West, of Philadelphia, the commander of the *Atlantic*, is one of the most accomplished and vigilant officers and one of the most kind and amiable men I have ever known. I never wish to cross the Atlantic in any but a vessel commanded by him. We did not see the sun rise or set during the whole voyage. The weather was either rainy or cloudy throughout, but many of the passengers were agreeable. Upon arriving here I found Mr. Lawrence, who came from London to receive me. It is my purpose to accompany him to London to-morrow, where I shall at first stay at the Clarendon Hotel. I do not yet know whether I shall take, or rather whether I can obtain, Mr. Ingersoll's house or not. I thought I would have to remain here some days to recruit; but I had scarcely got upon land before I felt perfectly well, and have enjoyed my dinner very much—the first meal for which I felt any appetite since I left New York. I shall write to you again as soon as I am settled at London, or probably sooner.

Although I left Wheatland with regret and a heavy heart, yet I am

resigned to my destiny, and shall enter upon the performance of my duties, with God's blessing, in a determined and cheerful spirit.

I received your letter in New York. I had not supposed there was any thing serious in Lily's apprehensions.

In the midst of calls and engagements, I have not time to write you a longer letter. Please to keep an eye on Eskridge and James Reynolds, as you promised.

Give my affectionate regard to Miss Hetty and Eskridge, and remember me to all my friends. In haste, I remain your affectionate uncle, etc.

LONDON, August 26th, 1853.

I have received your letter written a few days after my departure from New York, which is mislaid for the moment, and it afforded me great pleasure. It is the only letter which I have yet received from the United States.

I was presented to the queen at Osborne, in the Isle of Wight, on Tuesday last, by the Earl of Clarendon, and delivered her my letter of credence. She has not many personal charms, but is gracious and dignified in her manners, and her character is without blemish. The interview was brief. Mr. Ingersoll,\* who accompanied me to take his leave, and myself lunched at the palace with Lord Clarendon and several of the attachés of royalty. His conduct towards me is all I could have desired; and Miss Wilcox is a very nice girl.† They will pay a short visit to France and the continent, and return to the United States in October.

You have lost nothing by not coming to England with me. Parliament adjourned on last Saturday, and this was the signal for the nobility and gentry to go to their estates in the country. There they will remain until next February, and in the mean time London will be very dull. All gaiety in town is at an end, and has been transferred to the estates and country seats throughout the kingdom.

I have not yet procured a house, but hope to do so next week. I have just paid my bill for the first week at this hotel. I have two rooms and a chamber, have had no company to dine and have dined at home but three days, and the amount is £14 7s. 6d., equal to nearly \$75.00.

It is my desire to see you happily married, because, should I be called away, your situation would not be agreeable. Still you would have plenty. Whilst these are my sentiments, however, I desire that you shall exercise your own deliberate judgment in the choice of a husband. View steadily all the consequences, ask the guidance of Heaven, and make up your own mind, and I shall be satisfied. A competent independence is a good thing, if it can be obtained with proper affection; though I should not care for fortune provided the man of your choice was in a thriving and profitable business and possessed a high and fair character. I had not supposed there was any thing serious in the conversation; certainly none of your relatives can interpose any just objec-

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\* His predecessor.

† Niece of Mr. Ingersoll.

tion. Be, however, fully persuaded in your own mind, and act after due reflection; and may God guide you!

It will require some time to reconcile me to this climate. We have none of the bright and glorious sun and the clear blue sky of the United States; but neither have we the scorching heat, nor the mosquitos. I have slept comfortably under a blanket ever since I have been here, and almost every man you meet carries an umbrella. The winters, however, are not cold.

Society is in a most artificial position. It is almost impossible for an untitled individual who does not occupy an official position to enter the charmed circle. The richest and most influential merchants and bankers are carefully excluded. It is true, as we learned, that the niece of a minister at the head of his establishment does not enjoy his rank. At a dinner party, for example, whilst he goes to the head of the table, she must remain at or near the foot. Still, Miss Wilcox has made her way to much consideration, admiration and respect.

The rage which seems to pervade the people of the United States for visiting Europe is wonderful. It takes up much time at the legation to issue passports. London, however, is but a stopping place. They generally rush to Paris and the continent; and this, too, wisely, I have no doubt. I would not myself tarry at London longer than to see the sights. My promise to you shall be kept inviolate; and yet I have no doubt a visit to Europe with an agreeable party would be far more instructive and satisfactory to you than to remain for any considerable length of time with me in London. I thank my stars that you did not come with me, for you would have had a dreary time of it for the next six months.

But the despatches are to be prepared and the despatch bag must close at five o'clock for the steamer of to-morrow. I have time to write no more, but to assure you that I am always your affectionate uncle, etc.

September 15, 1853.

On the day before yesterday I received your kind letter of the 28th August, with a letter from Mary, which I have already answered. How rejoiced I am that she is contented and happy in San Francisco! I also received your favor of the 18th August in due time. I write to you this evening because I have important despatches to prepare for the Department to-morrow, to be sent by Saturday's steamer.

How rejoiced I am that you did not come with me! Perceiving your anxiety, I was several times on the point of saying to you, come along; but you would see nearly as much fashionable society at Wheatland as you would see here until February or March next. You cannot conceive how dull it is, though personally I am content. The *beau monde* are all at their country-seats or on the continent, there to remain until the meeting of Parliament. But what is worse than all, I have not yet been able to procure a house in which I would consent to live. I have looked at a great many,—the houses of the nobility and gentry; but the furniture in all of them is old, decayed

and wretched, and with very few exceptions, they are *very, very dirty*. I can account for this in no other manner than that they are not willing to rent them until the furniture is worn out, and that London is for them like a great watering place from about the first of March until the first of August. This hotel, which is the most fashionable in London, is not nearly equal to the first hotels in Philadelphia and New York, and yet the cost of living in it, with two rooms and a chamber, is about \$90 per week. The enormous expense [here] and the superior attractions [there] drive all the American travellers to Paris and the continent. The *London Times* has taken up the subject, and is now daily comparing the superior cheapness and superior accommodations of the hotels in the United States with those of London. Here there are no *table-d'hôtes*, and the house may be full without your knowing who is in it.

I think I have a treasure in the servant (Jackson) I brought with me from New York. If he should only hold out, he is all I could desire.

Mr. Welsh surpasses my expectations as a man of business. Colonel Lawrence, the attaché without pay, is industrious, gentlemanly, and has been highly useful. He knows everybody, and works as though he received \$10,000 per annum. I venture to say I have as able and useful a legation as any in London. Lawrence has gone to Scotland, in company with Miss Chapman and her father, and I think he is much pleased with her. In truth, she is a nice girl and very handsome. The Chapmans will return immediately to the United States.

The Marchioness of Wellesley is suffering from the dropsy, and she, with her sister, Lady Stafford, remained a few days at this house. I saw a good deal of them whilst they were here, and they have been very kind to me. They love to talk about America, and they yet appear to have genuine American hearts. Lady Wellesley lives at Hampton Court,—the old historic palace, about fifteen miles from London, erected by Cardinal Wolsey, and I am going there to dine with them and see the palace on Saturday. . . . . The Duchess of Leeds is in Scotland. These three American girls have had a strange fate. Many of their sex have envied them, but I think without cause. They are all childless, and would, I verily believe, have been more happy had they been united to independent gentlemen in their own country.

It is impossible to conceive of a more elegant and accomplished lady than Lady Wellesley, and although bowed down by disease, she still retains the relics of her former beauty. Her younger sister, Betsy Caton (Lady Stafford), the belle of belles in her day in America, has become gross and does not retain a trace of her good looks, except a cheerful and animated countenance. She is evidently a fine woman, and very much a Catholic devotee. They are all widows, except the Duchess of Leeds.

Rank, rank is everything in this country. My old friend of twenty years ago, Mrs. ———, the wife of the partner of the great House of ———, and then a nice little Yankee woman, who had never been at court, continually talks to me now about the duchess of this and the countess of that, and the queen, lords and ladies afford her a constant theme. Her daughter, and only



child, who will be immensely rich, is the wife of ———, and this has given her a lift. She is still, however, the same good kind-hearted woman she was in the ancient time; but has grown very large. They are now at their country-seat at ———, her husband's business preventing her from going far away. I have now nearly finished my sheet. I have not yet had time to see any of the lions. God bless you! Remember me kindly to Mrs. Hunter. I have written to Clemmie since I have been here.

From your affectionate uncle, etc.

September 30, 1853.

I have a few minutes to spare before the despatch bag closes and I devote them to writing a line to you. I have received your very kind and acceptable letter of the 14th September from Charleston, and cordially thank you for the agreeable and interesting information which it contains.

I have not yet obtained a house. It seems impossible to procure one, in every respect suitable for myself and the legation, for less than \$3500 to \$4500. The expense of living in this country exceeds even what I had anticipated. . . . . I shall preserve my hotel bills as curiosities.

I did not suppose that your name had reached thus far. I dined the other day at Hampton Court with Ladies Wellesley and Stafford. Mr. and Mrs. Woodville of Baltimore were present. Mrs. Woodville said she did not know you herself, but her youngest son was well acquainted with you and spoke of you in the highest terms. I found she had previously been saying pretty things of you to the two ladies. . . . .

I shrewdly suspect that Miss Chapman has made a conquest of Colonel Lawrence. He went off with her and her father on a visit to Scotland, and I shall not be much surprised if it should be a match, though I know nothing. The colonel is quite deaf which is very much against him.

She is delighted with her travels, is very handsome, and has a great deal of vivacity. . . . . Upon the whole I was much pleased with her.

I am sorry I have not time to write you a longer letter. Remember me very kindly to our friends in Virginia. May God bless you!

Yours very affectionately, etc.

October 14, 1853.

I have received yours of the 28th ultimo. I did not think I would write to you by to-morrow's steamer, but have a few minutes left before the closing of the bag. I am sorry, truly sorry, that you look upon your trip to England as "the future realization of a beautiful dream." Like all other dreams you will be disappointed in the reality. I have never yet met an American gentleman or lady who, whatever they may profess, was pleased with London. They hurry off to Paris, as speedily as possible, unless they have business to detain them here. A proud American, who feels himself equal at home to the best, does not like to be shut out by an impassable barrier from the best or rather the

highest society in this country. My official position will enable me to surmount this barrier, but I feel that it will only be officially. Neither my political antecedents nor the public business entrusted to my charge will make me a favorite with these people, and I shall never play toady to them.\* It is true I know very few of them as yet. They are all in the country, or on the continent, where they will continue until the opening of the spring. They pass the spring and part of the summer in London, just reversing the order in our country.

I do not think well of your going to Philadelphia to learn French. . . . . Clementina Pleasanton writes me that they will do all they can to instruct you in speaking that language. You will be far better with them than at a French boarding house in Philadelphia.

I saw Mr. and Mrs. Haines, Lily's friends, last evening. They left Paris about a week ago. She gave a glowing description of the delights of that city; but said she would be almost tempted to commit suicide, should she be compelled to remain long in London. When you write to Lily please to give her my love. Remember me very kindly to Mr. Davenport and your relatives, and believe me ever to be,

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

It was just twenty years since, on his return from St. Petersburg, Mr. Buchanan had passed a short time in England, and made the acquaintance of some of the public men of that period. This was in the latter part of the reign of King William IV. In 1853, Queen Victoria had been on the throne for sixteen years, and the reign was a very different one from that of her immediate predecessor. The cabinet was a coalition ministry, and was described by a sort of nick-name as the "Ministry of all the talents." It broke down rather disastrously and suddenly while Mr. Buchanan was in England, but on his arrival it seemed to have a long lease of power. Lord Aberdeen was the Premier; Mr. Gladstone, Chancellor of the Exchequer; Lord Palmerston (out of his proper element), was at the head of the Home Department; Lord Clarendon was Foreign Secretary; the Duke of Newcastle was Secretary for the Colonies; Mr. Sidney Herbert, Secretary at War; Lord John Russell was the ministerial leader of the House of Commons. The other members of the ministry were: Lord Cranworth, Lord Chancellor; Earl Granville, President of the Council; the Marquis

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\* This anticipation was not realized. He became a great "favorite" in English society, without any effort beyond the exercise of his social gifts, in a natural way.

of Lansdowne, without office; the Duke of Argyle, Lord Privy Seal; Sir James Graham, First Lord of the Admiralty; Sir Charles Wood, President of the Board of Control; Sir William Molesworth, First Commissioner of Public Works. In point of personal ability and character, this was a strong ministry. It went to pieces in 1855, in consequence of its want of capacity to conduct a foreign war, for which neither Lord Aberdeen nor Mr. Gladstone had any stomach, originally; for which the Duke of Newcastle, who had become Secretary at War, although an excellent man, had not the requisite force; and which should, in fact, have been under the guidance of Lord Palmerston, if there was to be a war with such a power as Russia, in conjunction with such an ally as Louis Napoleon. But when Mr. Buchanan came to London, the Crimean war was a good way in the distance, and it seemed not improbable that he would have a clear field for the settlement of the questions which had brought him to England.

It will strike the reader, however, oddly enough, after perusing the grave account which Mr. Buchanan has given of his reasons for accepting the mission, and the nature of the topics on which he was to negotiate, that while the conferences were going on between him and Lord Clarendon on the subjects which had brought him to London, he had to encounter a question of court etiquette. The story would hardly be worth repetition now, if it were not for the amusing *finale* of the whole affair. It may be introduced with a little preface.

On the accession of Queen Victoria, at the early age of eighteen, the Duke of Wellington is said to have drily remarked, that the Tories would have little chance under a female sovereign, since he had no small-talk and Peel had no manners.\* The Tories did not find it so in the sequel, for although, when the Whigs had to go out of power, in 1841, and the Queen had to part with her first official advisers, it cost her a rather severe personal struggle,—inasmuch as she is said to have written a very unconstitutional note to her old friend, Lord Melbourne, lamenting that “the sad, the too sad day has come

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\* Mr. Justin McCarthy is responsible for this anecdote. “History of our own Times.” Vol. I.

at last,"\*—yet, so wise and faithful had been the political education which that minister had given to his young sovereign, that at the very first necessity she gracefully yielded her personal feelings to her public duty, and made it certain that personal government, independent of the will of Parliament, had passed away forever from the public affairs of England. From that time forward, it seems to have been the accepted doctrine of the British constitution, that the sovereign is not merely a state pageant, but is a magistrate raised above the feelings or interests of party, with a function to perform in the State, which comprehends the right to be consulted on every question or measure, to offer advice, and to give a real as well as a formal assent, although bound at all times to receive as ministers those who can command the confidence for the time being of the House of Commons. And well and wisely has the woman whose reign has now extended to the unprecedented period of forty-seven years fulfilled this function of a constitutional sovereign. But her Majesty has long had the reputation of being very rigid in matters of court etiquette and ceremonial. The truth probably is, that at the commencement of her reign, the necessity for giving to the manners of the court a very different tone from that which had existed in the time of the late king, her uncle,—a necessity which coincided with her tastes as a lady, and her sense of what was becoming in her position,—had brought about a good deal that was regarded by strangers, and by some of her own subjects, as an unnecessary observance of punctilio. The officials of the court, whose duty it was to attend to these matters, very likely carried them farther than the queen's wishes or commands required. At all events, the sequel of Mr. Buchanan's little affair of what dress he should wear at the queen's receptions, does not show that her Majesty attached quite so much importance to it as did her master of ceremonies.

Governor Marcy, our Secretary of State, was a man of great vigor of intellect, and for all the important duties of his position an uncommonly wise and able statesman. But his intercourse with the world, aside from American politics, had not been

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\* This anecdote is given on private authority.

extensive. He had thought proper to issue a circular to the ministers of the United States in Europe, directing them to appear at the courts to which they were accredited, "in the simple dress of an American citizen." What this might be, in all cases, was not very clear. Our ministers at foreign courts had hitherto, on occasions of ceremony, worn a simple uniform, directed for them by the Department, which, whatever may have been its merits or its demerits as a costume, was sufficient to distinguish the wearer from "one of the upper court servants." All this was now to be changed, and our ministers were to go to court in the dress of "an American citizen," unless it should appear that non-conformity with the customs of the country would materially impair the proper discharge of their duties. In Mr. Buchanan's case, "the simple dress of an American citizen" was an affair of very easy determination. He wore at all times the kind of dress in which his figure appears in the frontispiece of the present volume; and his personal dignity was quite sufficient to make that dress appropriate anywhere. Although he was a democrat of democrats, and cared little for show of any kind, he was accustomed to pay that deference to the usages of society which a gentleman is always anxious to observe, and to which no one knew better than he how to accommodate himself. He was the last man in the world to attach undue importance to trifles, and it may well be supposed he was annoyed, when he found rather suddenly that the circular of the Secretary was about to cause a serious difficulty in regard to his position at the British court. The first intimation he had of this difficulty is described in a despatch which he wrote to Mr. Marcy on the 28th of October.

No. 13.

LEGATION, ETC., LONDON, October 28, 1853.

SIR:—

I deem it proper, however distasteful the subject may be, both to you and myself, to relate to you a conversation which I had on Tuesday last with Major-General Sir Edward Cust, the master of ceremonies at this court, concerning my court costume. I met him at the Traveller's Club, and after an introduction, your circular on this subject became the topic of conversation. He expressed much opposition to my appearance at court "in the simple dress of an American citizen." I said that such was the wish of my own Government and I intended to conform to it, unless the queen herself would intimate

her desire that I should appear in costume. In that event, I should feel inclined to comply with her majesty's wishes. He said that her majesty would not object to receive me at court in any dress I chose to put on; but whilst he had no authority to speak for her, he yet did not doubt it would be disagreeable to her if I did not conform to the established usage. He said I could not of course expect to be invited to court balls or court dinners where all appeared in costumes; that her majesty never invited the bishops to balls, not deeming it compatible with their character; but she invited them to concerts, and on these occasions, as a court dress was not required, I would also be invited. He grew warm by talking, and said that, whilst the queen herself would make no objections to my appearance at court in any dress I thought proper, yet the people of England would consider it *presumption*. I became somewhat indignant in my turn, and said that whilst I entertained the highest respect for her majesty, and desired to treat her with the deference which was eminently her due, yet it would not make the slightest difference to me, individually, whether I ever appeared at court.

He stated that in this country an invitation from the queen was considered a command.

I paid no attention to this remark, but observed that the rules of etiquette at the British court were more strict even than in Russia. Senator Douglas of the United States had just returned from St. Petersburg. When invited to visit the czar in costume, he informed Count Nesselrode that he could not thus appear. The count asked him in what dress he appeared before the President of the United States. Mr. Douglas answered in the dress he then wore. The count, after consulting the emperor, said that was sufficient, and in this plain dress he visited the emperor at the palace and on parade, and had most agreeable conversations with him on both occasions.

Sir Edward then expressed his gratification at having thus met me accidentally,—said he had just come to town for that day and should leave the next morning, but would soon do himself the honor of calling upon me.

Although he disclaimed speaking by the authority of the queen, yet it appeared both to myself and Colonel Lawrence, who was present, that they must have had some conversation in the court circle on the subject. I entertain this belief the more firmly, as Sir Edward has since talked to a member of this legation in the same strain.

So then, from present appearances, it is probable I shall be placed socially in Coventry on this question of dress, because it is certain that should her majesty not invite the American minister to her balls and dinners, he will not be invited to the balls and dinners of her courtiers. This will be to me, personally, a matter of not the least importance, but it may deprive me of the opportunity of cultivating friendly and social relations with the ministers and other courtiers which I might render available for the purpose of obtaining important information and promoting the success of my mission.

I am exceedingly anxious to appear "at court in the simple dress of an American citizen;" and this not only because it accords with my own taste,

but because it is certain that if the minister to the court of St. James should appear in uniform, your circular will become a dead letter in regard to most, if not all, the other ministers and chargés of our country in Europe.

The difficulty in the present case is greatly enhanced by the fact that the sovereign is a lady, and the devotion of her subjects towards her partakes of a mingled feeling of loyalty and gallantry. Any conduct, therefore, on my part which would look like disrespect towards her personally could not fail to give great offence to the British people. Should it prove to be impossible for me to conform to the suggestions of the circular, in regard to dress "without detriment to the public interest," and "without impairing my usefulness to my country," then I shall certainly and cheerfully be guided by its earnest recommendation and "adopt the nearest approach to it compatible with the due performance of my public duties." This course I pursued from choice whilst minister in Russia, and this course I should have pursued here without any instructions.

Yours very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

We next get some reference to the dress question in the following letter to Miss Lane:

LONDON, December 9, 1853.

MY DEAR HARRIET:—

I received your favor of the 14th ultimo in due time, and thank you for the information it contained, all of which was interesting to me.

In regard to your coming to London with Colonel Lawrence and his lady, should he be married in February next, I have this to say: Your passage at that season of the year would, unless by a happy accident, be stormy and disagreeable, though not dangerous. I have scarcely yet recovered from the effects of the voyage, and should you be as bad a sailor as myself, and have a rough passage, it might give your constitution a shock. The month of April would be a much more agreeable period to cross the Atlantic; and you would still arrive here in time for the most fashionable and longer part of the fashionable season.

It is my duty to inform you that a general conviction prevails here, on the part of Lord Palmerston, the secretary of the interior, and the distinguished physicians, as well as among the intelligent people, that the cholera will be very bad in London and other parts of England during the latter part of the next summer and throughout the autumn. They are now making extensive preparations, and adopting extensive sanitary measures to render the mortality as small as possible. The London journals contain articles on the subject almost every day. Their reason for this conviction is,—that we have just had about as many cases of cholera during the past autumn, as there were during the autumn in a former year, preceding the season when it raged so extensively and violently. Now this question will be for your own consideration. I think it my duty to state the facts, and it will be for you to decide whether

you will postpone your visit until the end of the next autumn for this reason, or at least until we shall see whether the gloomy anticipations here are likely to be realized.

I still anticipate difficulty about my costume; but should this occur, it will probably continue throughout my mission. It is, therefore, no valid reason why you should postpone your visit. In that event you must be prepared to share my fate. So far as regards the consequences to myself, I do not care a button for them; but it would mortify me very much to see you treated differently from other ladies in your situation.

If this costume affair should not prove an impediment, I feel that I shall get along very smoothly here. The fashionable world, with the exception of the high officials, are all out of London, and will remain absent until the last of February or beginning of March. I have recently been a good deal in the society of those who are now here, and they all seem disposed to treat me very kindly, especially the ladies. Their hours annoy me very much. My invitations to dinner among them are all for a quarter before eight, which means about half-past that hour. There is no such thing as social visiting here of an evening. This is all done between two and six in the afternoon, if such visits may be called social. I asked Lady Palmerston what was meant by the word "early" placed upon her card of invitation for an evening reception, and she informed me it was about ten o'clock. The habits, and customs, and business of the world here render these hours necessary. But how ridiculous it is in our country, where no such necessity exists, to violate the laws of nature in regard to hours, merely to follow the fashions of this country.

Should you be at Mr. Ward's, I would thank you to present my kind love to Miss Ellen. I hope you will not forget the interests of Eskridge in that quarter. You inform me that Sallie Grier and Jennie Pleasanton were about to be married. I desire to be remembered with special kindness to Mrs. Jenkins. I can never forget "the auld lang syne" with her and her family. Give my love also to Kate Reynolds. Remember me to Miss Hetty, or as you would say, Miss Hettie, for whom I shall ever entertain a warm regard. I send this letter open to Eskridge, so that he may read it and send it to your direction.

From your affectionate uncle,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

As the court was not in London at the time when this letter was written, the portentous question of Mr. Buchanan's costume was not likely to be brought to an immediate solution. But early in February, (1854), Parliament was to be opened by the queen in person. Mr. Buchanan did not attend the ceremony; and thereupon there was an outcry in the London press. The following extract from a despatch to Mr. Marcy gives a full account of the whole matter, up to the date:



You will perceive by the London journals, the *Times*, the *Morning Post*, the *News*, the *Morning Herald*, the *Spectator*, the *Examiner*, *Lloyd's*, &c., &c., copies of which I send you, that my absence from the House of Lords, at the opening of Parliament, has produced quite a sensation. Indeed, I have found difficulty in preventing this incident from becoming a subject of inquiry and remark in the House of Commons. All this is peculiarly disagreeable to me, and has arisen entirely from an indiscreet and rather offensive remark of the *London Times*, in the account which that journal published of the proceedings at the opening of Parliament. But for this, the whole matter would probably have passed away quietly, as I had desired.

Some time after my interview with Sir Edward Cust, the master of ceremonies, in October last (whom I have never since seen), which I reported to you in my despatch No. 13, of the 28th of October, I determined, after due reflection, neither to wear gold lace nor embroidery at court; and I did not hesitate to express this determination. The spirit of your circular, as well as my own sense of propriety, brought me to this conclusion. I did not deem it becoming in me, as the representative of a Republic, to imitate a court costume, which may be altogether proper in the representatives of royalty. A minister of the United States should, in my opinion, wear something more in character with our Democratic institutions than a coat covered with embroidery and gold lace. Besides, after all, this would prove to be but a feeble attempt "to ape foreign fashions;" because, most fortunately, he could not wear the orders and stars which ornament the coats of other diplomatists, nor could he, except in rare instances, afford the diamonds, unless hired for the occasion.

At the same time, entertaining a most sincere respect for the exalted character of the queen, both as a sovereign and a lady, I expressed a desire to appear at court in such a dress as I might suppose would be most agreeable to herself, without departing from the spirit of the circular.

It was then suggested to me, from a quarter which I do not feel at liberty to mention, that I might assume the civil dress worn by General Washington; but after examining Stewart's portrait, at the house of a friend, I came to the conclusion that it would not be proper for me to adopt this costume. I observed, "fashions had so changed since the days of Washington, that if I were to put on his dress, and appear in it before the chief magistrate of my own country, at one of his receptions, I should render myself a subject of ridicule for life. Besides, it would be considered presumption in me to affect the style of dress of the Father of his Country."

It was in this unsettled state of the question, and before I had adopted any style of dress, that Parliament was opened. If, however, the case had been different, and I had anticipated a serious question, prudential reasons would have prevented me from bringing it to issue at the door of the House of Lords. A court held at the palace would, for many reasons, be a much more appropriate place for such a purpose.

Under these circumstances, I received, on the Sunday morning before the Tuesday on which Parliament met, a printed circular from Sir Edward Cust,

similar to that which I have no doubt was addressed to all the other foreign ministers, inviting me to attend the opening of the session. The following is extracted from this circular: "No one can be admitted into the Diplomatic Tribune, or in the body of the House, but in full court dress."

Now, from all the attending circumstances, I do not feel disposed to yield to the idea that any disrespect was intended by this circular, either to my country or to myself. Since I came to London, I have received such attentions from high official personages as to render this quite improbable. What may be the final result of the question I cannot clearly foresee, but I do not anticipate any serious difficulties.

In the latter part of February the queen held the first levée of the season. Mr. Buchanan had signified to the master of ceremonies that he should present himself at the queen's levée in the kind of dress that he always wore, with the addition of a plain dress sword. The result is given in the course of the following letters to his niece; and thus, through a happy expedient, assented to cheerfully by the queen, this Gordian knot was cut by a drawing-room rapier which never left its sheath. In fact, Mr. Buchanan had already become so much liked in the royal circle and in society generally, that the court officials could not longer refuse to let him have his own way about his reception at the levée, especially after he had dined at the palace in "frock-dress," an invitation which was doubtless given in good-humored compliance with his wishes, and to smooth the way into the more formal reception.

[TO MISS LANE.]

LONDON, February 18th, 1854.

MY DEAR HARRIET:—

According to my calculation, Captain West will leave New York for Liverpool in the Atlantic on Saturday, the 29th April; and it is my particular desire that you should come with him, *under his special care*, in preference to any other person. I shall send this letter open to Captain West, and if he should transmit it to you with a line stating that he will take charge of the freight, you may then consider the matter settled. I shall meet you, God willing, in Liverpool.

I have no doubt that the lady whom you mention in yours of the 2d instant would be an agreeable companion, and should she come in the Atlantic at the same time with yourself, it is all very well; but even in that event, I desire that you should be under the special care of Captain West. He is a

near relative of our old friend, Redmond Conyngham, and I have the most perfect confidence in him both as a gentleman and a sailor. He stays at the Astor House when in New York, and you had better stop there with your brother when about to embark.

Had he been coming out two weeks earlier in April, I should have been better pleased; but on no account would I have consented to your voyage until near the middle of that month. Yours affectionately, etc.

LONDON, February 21st, 1854.

I have received your letter of the 2d instant, and am truly rejoiced to learn that you have recovered your usual good health. I hope you will take good care of yourself in Washington and not expose yourself to a relapse.

I intended to write you a long letter to-day, but an unexpected pressure of business will prevent me from doing this before the despatch bag closes. I now write merely to inform you that I have made every arrangement for your passage with Captain West in the Atlantic, either on Saturday, the 15th, or Saturday, the 29th April. He does not at present know which, but he will inform you on his arrival in New York. He will leave Liverpool to-morrow. And let me assure you that this is the very best arrangement which could be made for you. You will be quite independent, and under the special charge of the captain. You will discover that you will thus enjoy many advantages. If you have friends or acquaintances coming out at the same time, this is all very well; *but let not this prevent you from putting yourself under the special charge of Captain West; and you can say that this is my arrangement.* I wish you to inform me whether you will leave New York on the 15th or 29th April, so that I may make arrangements accordingly. In either event I shall, God willing, meet you at Liverpool. I shall write to Eskridge by the next steamer, and direct him to provide for your passage. You will of course have no dresses made in the United States. I am not a very close observer, or an accurate judge, but I think the ladies here of the very highest rank do not dress as expensively, with the exception of jewels, as those in the United States.

I dined on Wednesday last with the queen, at Buckingham Palace. Both she and Prince Albert were remarkably civil, and I had quite a conversation with each of them separately. But the question of costume still remains: and from this I anticipate nothing but trouble in several directions. I was invited "in frock-dress" to the dinner, and of course I had no difficulty. To-morrow will be the first levée of the queen, and my appearance there in a suit of plain clothes will, I have no doubt, produce quite a sensation, and become a subject of gossip for the whole court.

I wish very much that I could obtain an autograph of General Washington for the Countess of Clarendon. She has been very civil to me, and like our friend Laura is a collector of autographs. She is very anxious to obtain such an autograph, and I have promised to do my best to procure it for her. Perhaps Mr. Pleasanton could help me to one.

The first wish of my heart is to see you comfortably and respectably settled in life; but ardently as I desire this, you ought never to marry any person for whom you think you would not have a proper degree of affection. You inform me of your conquest, and I trust it may be of such a character as will produce good fruit. But I have time to say no more, except to request that you will give my love to Laura and Clemmie, and my kindest regards to Mr. Pleasanton, and also to Mr. and Mrs. Slidell and Mr. and Mrs. Thomson, of New Jersey. Ever yours affectionately, etc.

LONDON, February 24, 1854.

Mr. Peabody handed me at the dinner-table the enclosed, which he made me promise to send to you. Mr. Macalester had mentioned your name to him.

The dress question, after much difficulty, has been finally and satisfactorily settled. I appeared at the levée on Wednesday last, in just such a dress as I have worn at the President's one hundred times. A black coat, white waistcoat and cravat and black pantaloons and dress boots, with the addition of a very plain black-handled and black-hilted dress sword. This to gratify those who have yielded so much, and to distinguish me from the upper court servants. I knew that I would be received in any dress I might wear; but could not have anticipated that I should be received in so kind and distinguished a manner. Having yielded they did not do things by halves. As I approached the queen, an arch but benevolent smile lit up her countenance;—as much as to say, you are the first man who ever appeared before me at court in such a dress. I confess that I never felt more proud of being an American than when I stood in that brilliant circle, "in the simple dress of an American citizen." I have no doubt the circular is popular with a majority of the people of England. Indeed, many of the most distinguished members of Parliament have never been at court, because they would not wear the prescribed costume.

I find lying on the table before me a note from the Duchess of Somerset, which possibly Laura might be glad to have as an autograph. She prides herself on being descended in a direct line from Robert the Third of Scotland.

With my love to Laura and Clemmie, and my best regards to Mr. Pleasanton, I remain, in haste, yours affectionately, etc.

LONDON, March 10, 1854.

I have received yours of the 16th ultimo, from Philadelphia, and am rejoiced to learn from yourself that your health has been entirely restored. For several reasons I should have been glad you had gone to Washington at an early period of the winter, as I desired, and I hope you went there, as you said you would, the week after the date of your letter.

You have not mentioned the name of Miss Wilcox in any of your letters, and from this I presume you have not made her acquaintance. I regret this, because she was much esteemed among her acquaintances here, and many

persons whom you will meet will make inquiries of you concerning her. She talked of you to me.

I shall soon expect to learn from you whether you will leave New York with Captain West for Liverpool on the 15th or 29th April. God willing, I shall meet you at Liverpool. I should be very glad if Mrs. Commodore Perry would accompany you. I am well acquainted with her, and esteem her highly. Still, I repeat my desire, that in any event you should come with Captain West on one of the two days designated. I have no news of any importance to communicate. I am getting along here smoothly and comfortably, determined to make the best of a situation not very agreeable to me. My health has absolutely required that I should decline many 7½ and 8 o'clock dinner invitations, and evening parties commencing at 10½ and 11 o'clock.

I venture to predict that you will not be much pleased with London, and I desire that you should not be disappointed. You must not anticipate too much, except from seeing the sights. These are numerous and interesting, from their historical associations. I have been making inquiries concerning a maid for you.

Please to remember me, in the kindest terms, to Mr. Pleasanton, and give my love to Laura and Clemmie. Ever yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

In a despatch to Mr. Marcy, written soon after his appearance at the Queen's levée, Mr. Buchanan said: "I have purposely avoided to mention the names of those with whom I have had interviews on this subject, lest it might expose them to censorious remarks hereafter; but having mentioned that of Sir Edward Cust, the master of ceremonies, in my despatch No. 13, of the 28th October last, it is but an act of simple justice to state, that at the court on Wednesday last, his attentions to me were of the kindest and most marked character, and have placed me under many obligations. In the matter of the sword, I yielded without reluctance to the earnest suggestion of a high official character, who said that a sword, at all the courts of the world, was considered merely as the mark of a gentleman, and although he did not mention the queen's name, yet it was evident, from the whole conversation, that this was desired as a token of respect for her Majesty. He had, on a former occasion, expressed the hope that I would wear something indicating my official position, and not appear at court, to employ his own language, in the dress I wore upon the street. I told him promptly that I should comply with his suggestion, and that in

wearing a sword at court, as an evidence of the very high regard which I felt for her Majesty, I should do nothing inconsistent with my own character as an American citizen, or that of my country. I might have added that as 'the simple dress of an American citizen' is exactly that of the upper court servants, it was my purpose from the beginning to wear something which would distinguish me from them. At the first, I had thought of United States buttons; but a plain dress sword has a more manly and less gaudy appearance. I hope I am now done with this subject forever."

So that, after all, it appears plainly enough that, so far as the queen herself was concerned, her Majesty's wish was only that the representative of the nation nearest in blood to her own, should honor his country by paying to her a mark of respect, by a token that would indicate the official position in which he stood before her. As soon as Mr. Buchanan perceived this, he acted as became him, and from that time forward he was as welcome a guest in the royal circle as any one who entered it.

[FROM SECRETARY MARCY.]

(Private and confidential.)

WASHINGTON, January 3, 1856.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have just finished a despatch in answer to Lord Clarendon's last on British recruitment in the United States. You will be startled at its length, and I consider it objectionable in that respect, but the peculiar character of the one to which it is a reply rendered a review of the whole subject unavoidable. You are requested to read it to Lord Clarendon, but I presume he will do as I did when his was presented to me by Mr. Crampton—I moved to dispense with the reading, or rather had it read by the title, and received the copy.

I do not mean to trouble you with any other comments upon it, but merely to remark that you will find that I have been very mindful of your kind suggestion. The *suaviter in modo* has really very much impaired the *fortiter in re*. The manner I am quite sure will please Lord Clarendon, but I presume the matter will not. I really believe he does not know how offensively British officers have behaved in this recruiting business; but he had the means of knowing all about it, and when it was made a grave matter of complaint it should have been investigated. After the issues of fact and of law made in the case, and the refusal on the part of Great Britain to do anything which could be regarded as a satisfaction, it was not possible to avoid the recall of Mr. Crampton.

You will see by the papers here that the debate in the Senate on the Central American question has opened finely. I do not think that advocates even among any of the factions can be found who will attempt to justify the conduct of the British ministry in that affair.

The correspondence on the subject appears in the "*The Union*" of this morning and you will receive it as soon as you will this letter. We shall all be very anxious to learn how it has been received by the British government and people.

The people of the United States are not in a very good humor towards the British government at this time, yet there is great calmness in the public mind, which indicates a settled purpose to stand for their rights.

The strengthening the British fleet in this quarter was regarded as a harmless menace. Our people rather admired the folly of the measure than indulged any angry feelings on account of it. The comments of the British press and the miserable pretexts got up as an excuse for that blunder have provoked some resentment, which the course of the British cabinet in regard to the Central American questions and recruiting in the United States will not abate.

We are willing—more—anxious to be on friendly terms with our "transatlantic cousins," but they must recollect that we do not believe in the doctrine of primogeniture. The younger branch of the family has equal rights with the elder.

I am unable to say to you one word in regard to your successor. Who he will be and when he will be sent out, I think no living man now knows.

Yours truly,

W. L. MARCY.

[TO MR. MARCY.]

(Private.)

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES, }  
LONDON, January 11, 1856. }

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favor of the 23d ultimo, and am greatly disappointed neither to have received the message nor any inkling of what it contains. Long expectation has blunted the edge of curiosity here, and it will not make the impression it would have done four weeks ago.

I shall expect your answer to Lord C. with much interest, and shall do all in my power to give it its proper effect with his lordship. For my own part, I should have been inclined to cut the Gordian knot as soon as I possessed clear proof of Mr. Crampton's complicity, and I am persuaded this was expected at the time in this country. No doubt, however, yours is the more prudent course.

You say that if I can settle the Central American difficulty, and you the recruitment question, they may blow what blast they please on any of their organs. That you can perform the latter there can be no doubt; the former

is a sheer impossibility during the administration of Lord Palmerston.\* Any attempt of the kind will only more deeply commit this government and render it more difficult for a succeeding government to do us justice. It is still my impression there will be peace in Europe before the season for opening the next campaign; and this will leave England in such a state of preparation for war as she has never been at any former period. This may act as a stimulus to the reckless and arrogant propensities of Lord P., which have been so often manifested by him in his intercourse with other nations.

I have more than once had occasion to admire your self-possession and "sang-froid," but never was it more strikingly illustrated than in the concluding and, as it were, incidental sentence of your letter: "I do not learn that the President has his mind turned towards any one for your successor, or for secretary of legation." This is cool. I had confidently expected that immediately after Mr. Appleton's arrival in Washington, I should hear of the appointment of my successor, and I felt assured that if there had been need, you would have "*turned*" the President's mind towards a subject in which I felt so deep an interest.

As I have on more than one occasion informed you, I do believe that had it been possible for the new minister to be here for a fortnight before my departure this would have been greatly to his benefit, and perhaps to that of the country. This is now impossible. My nephew left me yesterday for Naples and Rome, and I was truly sorry not to be able to accompany him, as he speaks French like a Parisian, and Italian tolerably well, and would, therefore, have been highly useful. I am again left with no person except Mr. Moran (who, to do him justice, performs his duties to my entire satisfaction), and yet the President's mind has not been "*turned* towards any one," even for secretary of legation. I hope, at least, that a secretary may arrive before the 12th February, as it would have a better appearance to leave the legation in his charge than in that of the consul.

You seem to take it hard that your former assistant should be acting in concert with Don Magnifico Markoe, still one of your lieutenants, in favor of the nomination of Mr. Dallas, and well you may. Such ingratitude towards yourself is a proof of the depravity of human nature. But there is one consolation. As somebody says: "The vigor of the bow does not equal the venom of the shaft." I misquote, and don't recollect the precise language.

I still think there will be peace. France and Turkey both desire it, and Russia needs it. John Bull is still for war, but this only to recover his prestige. He has incurred immense expense in getting ready and don't want to throw his money away. If peace should remove Lord P., this would be a most happy consummation. Had Mrs. M. been in your place, the President's mind would ere this have been "*turned*" towards somebody for my successor. Please to present her my kindest regards, and believe me to be,

Yours very respectfully, etc.,

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\* Lord Palmerston had then recently become premier in place of Lord Aberdeen.



LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES, }  
LONDON, January 18, 1856. }

I have an hour ago received your despatch of the 28th ultimo, and have only had time to give it a cursory perusal. I have not yet read the despatch of Lord Clarendon to which it is an answer. It appears to me to be of characteristic clearness and ability, and its tone is excellent. Still its conclusion will startle this government. I have had an appointment with Lord Clarendon postponed more than once, on account of the dangerous illness of his mother. She died on Sunday morning last, and his lordship informed me through his private secretary that as soon after the event as possible he would appoint a time for our meeting.

The Central American questions are well and ably stated in the message received two or three days ago. I know from reliable authority that Lord Palmerston "has very strong views on the subject." The *Times* is a mighty power in the State; and I have adopted means, through the agency of a friend, to prevent that journal from committing itself upon the questions until after its conductors shall have an opportunity of examining the correspondence. These means have hitherto proved effectual. The correspondence has now arrived, and the *Times* may indicate its views to-morrow morning. The tone of the other journals has not been satisfactory; and the *Daily Telegraph* has been evidently bought over, and become hostile to the United States within the last four days, as you will perceive from the number which I send. Should the *Times* take ground against us, it is my purpose to have an edition of that part of the message relating to Central America, and the correspondence, published in pamphlet form, and circulated among members of Parliament and other influential persons. Should the expense be great, I may call upon you to pay it out of the contingent fund.

A few hasty remarks upon the present condition of affairs in this country. The Austrian proposals, as you will see by the papers, have been accepted by the czar. This is distasteful to the British people who have made vast preparations, at an enormous expense, to recover their military and naval *prestige* in the next campaign. But peace is evidently desired by Louis Napoleon and the French, by the Turks and by the Sardinians. It still continues to be my opinion that peace will be made. In this state of affairs, the British people being sore and disappointed and being better prepared for war than they have ever been, Lord Palmerston, whose character is reckless and his hostility to our country well known, will most probably assume a high and defiant attitude on the questions pending between the two countries. The British people are now in that state of feeling that I firmly believe they could be brought up to a war with the United States, *if they can be persuaded that the territory in dispute belongs to themselves*. This, absurd as it is, may be done through the agency of a press generally, if not universally, hostile to us. I make these remarks because you ought to know the truth and be prepared for the worst. *Certainly not with a view of yielding one iota of our rights to Great Britain or any other power. Most certainly not.*

I understand from friends that it is now stated by British individuals in conversation, how easy it would be for them in their present state of preparation, and with our feeble navy, to bring a war with us to a speedy and successful conclusion. In this they would be woefully mistaken.

I have great hopes, however, that the peace will upset Lord Palmerston. The session of Parliament will commence with a powerful opposition against him.

Do contrive by some means to hasten the construction of a railroad to the Pacific and to increase our navy. Such a road is as necessary for war purposes as the construction of a fort to defend any of our cities.

I have not time to write more before the closing of the bag.

I deeply regret to find that so late as the 3d of January you are *unable* to say one word to me in regard to my successor. For this cause, I think I have good reason to complain.

With my kind regards always to Mrs. Marcy, I remain

Yours very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

P. S.—I ought not to forget to say that the President's message has received great commendation among enlightened people in this country. I am sorry you did not inform me at an earlier period that it was the President's intention to demand the recall of Mr. Crampton, etc., that I might have prepared them for such a result.

[TO NAHUM CAPEN, ESQ.]

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES, }  
LONDON, January 18, 1856. }

MY DEAR SIR :—

..... Many thanks for your friendly wishes. They are cordially reciprocated. Your kindly feelings towards myself have doubtless greatly magnified my popularity at home, but were the Presidency within my reach, which I am far from believing, I might then exclaim :

“ Will fortune never come with both hands full ?  
She either gives a stomach and no food,  
Or else a feast and takes away the stomach.”

I cannot yet say when I shall return home, but I expect by every steamer to hear of the appointment of my successor. Indeed, I have been greatly disappointed in being detained here so long. After my relief it is my purpose to pay a brief visit to the continent. At the latest, God willing, I expect to be at home some time in April—possibly before the end of March.

Without a secretary of legation, my letters must be brief. For this I know you will excuse me.

With my best wishes for your health and happiness, I remain always,

Very respectfully, your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[TO MR. MARCY.]

LONDON, January 25, 1856.

MY DEAR SIR:—

From present appearances the Central American questions can lead to no serious difficulties with England. Public opinion would here seem to be nearly altogether in favor of our construction of the treaty. Such I learn, is the conversation at the clubs and in society; and with the *Times*, as well as the *Daily News* on our side, and this in accordance with public sentiment, we might expect a speedy settlement of these questions, if any statesman except Lord Palmerston were at the head of the government. He cannot long remain in power, I think, after peace shall have been concluded. I expect to go to Paris after the 12th of February, and may write to you from there, should I have a conversation with Louis Napoleon. I shall see Lord Clarendon early next week, and you may expect by the next steamer to hear the result of my reading your despatch to his lordship.

I still continue firm in the belief that peace will be concluded, though it is manifestly distasteful to the British people.

I met Sir Charles Wood, the first lord of the admiralty, at dinner the other day, and had some fun with him about sending the fleet to our shores. He said they had only sent a few old hulks, and with such vessels they could never have thought of hostilities against such a power as the United States; and asked me if I had ever heard that one of them approached our shores. I might have referred him to the Screw Blocks. The conversation was altogether agreeable and afforded amusement to the persons near us at the table. He said: "Buchanan, if you and I had to settle the questions between the two governments, they would be settled speedily." I know not whether there was any meaning beneath this expression.

I consider this mission as a sort of waif abandoned by the Government. Not a word even about a secretary of legation, though Mr. Appleton left me more than two months ago. With the amount of business to transact, and the number of visits to receive, I have to labor like a drayman. Have you no bowels?

The reports, concerning our officers, received from the Crimea, are highly complimentary and satisfactory, and the people here are much gratified with the letter received from the Secretary of War, thanking General Simpson for his kindness and attention towards them.

Before I go away I intend to get up a letter from Lord Clarendon and yourself, manifesting your sense of the manner in which Mr. Bates performed his duty as umpire. As he will accept no pay, it is as little as you can do, to say, "thank you, sir."

I am informed there is a publisher in London about to publish the Central American correspondence in pamphlet form, believing it will yield him a profit.

I have just received a letter from Mason, written in excellent spirits, prais-

ing Mr. Wise, his new secretary. For poor me, this is sour grapes. Never forgetting my friend, Mrs. Marcy,

I remain yours very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[TO GOVERNOR BIGLER.]

LONDON, February 12, 1856.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I did not receive your kind and friendly letter of the 21st ultimo until last evening, and although oppressed by my public duties to-day, I cannot suffer a steamer to depart without bearing you an answer.

We had been friends for many years before our friendship was suspended. The best course to pursue in renewing it again is to suffer bygones to be bygones. In this spirit I cordially accept your overtures, and shall forget everything unpleasant in our past relations. When we meet again, let us meet as though no estrangement had ever existed between us, and it shall not be my fault if we should not remain friends as long as we both may live. I wish you an honorable and useful career in the Senate.

I had hoped to return home with Miss Lane in October last, but a succession of threatening incidents has occurred in the relations between the two countries which has kept me here until the present moment. And even now I do not know when I can leave my post. My private business requires that I should be at home on the 1st of April, but no pecuniary consideration can induce me to desert my public duty at such a moment as the present. I trust, however, that by the next steamer I shall hear of the appointment of my successor.

In regard to the Presidency to which you refer, if my own wishes had been consulted, my name should never again have been mentioned in connection with that office. I feel, nevertheless, quite as grateful to my friends for their voluntary exertions in my favor during my absence, as though they had been prompted by myself. It is a consolation which I shall bear with me to my dying day, that the Democracy of my native state have sustained me with so much unanimity. I shall neither be disappointed nor in the slightest degree mortified should the Cincinnati Convention nominate another person; but in the retirement, the prospect of which is now so dear to me, the consciousness that Pennsylvania has stood by me to the last will be a delightful reflection. Our friends Van Dyke and Lynch have kept me advised of your exertions in my favor.

I am happy to inform you that within the last fortnight public opinion has evidently undergone a change in favor of our country. The best evidence of this is perhaps the friendly tone of Lord Palmerston's speech on Friday night last. His lordship has, however, done me injustice in attributing to me expressions which I never uttered, or rather which I never wrote, for all is in writing. All I said in relation to the matter in question was that I should have much satisfaction in transmitting a copy of Lord Clarendon's note to

the Secretary of State. I never had a word with Lord Palmerston on the subject.

The moment has arrived for closing the despatch bags, and I conclude by assuring you of my renewed friendship.

Yours very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[TO MR. MARCY.]

(Private and confidential.)

LONDON, February 15, 1856.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favor of the 27th ultimo, and although the contents are very acceptable, yet, like a lady's letter, its pith and marrow are in the two postscripts, informing me that Mr. Dallas had been offered and would probably accept this mission. By the newspapers I learn that his nomination had been sent to the Senate. It is long since I have heard such welcome news. But there is some alloy in almost every good, and in my own joy, I cannot but sympathize with you for the loss of Mr. Markoe, who, the papers say, is to be appointed the secretary of legation. Pray bear it with Christian resignation.

I need not say that I shall do all I can to give Mr. Dallas a fair start.

I have two things to request of you :

1. Although I have no doubt the omission of Lady Palmerston to invite me to her first party was both intentional and significant *at the time*, yet I should be unwilling to leave the fact on record in a public despatch. I will, therefore, send you by the next steamer the same despatch, number 119, of the 4th instant, with that portion of it omitted. When you receive this, please to withdraw the first despatch and keep it for me until my return.

2. Should you, in your friendly discretion, deem it advisable under the circumstances, please to have an editorial prepared for the *Union*, stating the facts in my last despatch (a duplicate of which is now sent you), in relation to the remarks of Lord Palmerston as to my expression of satisfaction with the apology contained in Lord Clarendon's note of the 16th July. I send you with this a pamphlet which has just been published here on this subject. I know the author. He is an Englishman of character. Several members of Parliament have called upon me for information, but my position requires that I should be very chary. I have furnished some of them with copies of Hertz's trial, among the rest Mr. Roebuck. I met him afterwards in society, and it was evident the pamphlet had strongly impressed him with Mr. Cramp-ton's complicity. Still it is not to be denied that Lord Palmerston's speech on Friday last, in relation to this subject, has made a strong impression here, as it has done on the continent, judging by the facts stated in my despatch.

I know from the tone of your letter that you would consider me in a state of mental delusion if I were to say how indifferent I feel in regard to myself on the question of the next Presidency. You would be quite a sceptic. One

thing is certain that neither by word nor letter have I ever contributed any support to myself. I believe that the next Presidential term will perhaps be the most important and responsible of any which has occurred since the origin of the Government, and whilst no competent and patriotic man to whom it may be offered should shrink from the responsibility, yet he may well accept it as the greatest trial of his life. Of course nothing can be expected from you but a decided support of your chief.

Never forgetting my excellent and esteemed friend, whose influence I shrewdly suspect put you in motion in regard to the appointment of a successor, I remain, as always,

Yours very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[TO HIS HOUSEKEEPER, "MISS HETTY."]

LONDON, February 15, 1856.

MY DEAR MISS HETTY:—

Although greatly hurried to-day, having heavy despatches, according to my rule I suffer not a steamer to pass without answering your letters. Your last of the 26th ultimo was most agreeable. You give me information concerning the neighbors which I highly prize. Every thing about home is dear to me, and you can scarcely realize how much pleasure I feel in the prospect of being with you ere long, should a kind Providence spare my life and my health. I have had no secretary of legation with me for several months, and I have had to labor very hard. I hope to experience the delight of being idle, or rather doing what I please, at Wheatland.

After many vain entreaties, Mr. Dallas has at length been appointed my successor, and I expect him here by the end of this month. Whether I shall return immediately home, or go to Paris for a few weeks, I have not yet determined. The former I would greatly prefer; but March is a very rough month to pass the Atlantic, and I suffer wretchedly from sea-sickness all the time. I am now, thank God, in good health, and I do not wish to impair it on the voyage. . . . .

I wish John Brenner joy in advance of his marriage. Remember me kindly to Mr. Fahnestock and your sister, and to all our neighbors and friends, and tell them how happy I shall be to meet them once more. Remember me, also, most kindly, to Father Keenan. . . . .

With sincere and affectionate regard, I remain always your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[TO HIS NIECE, MRS. BAKER.]

LONDON, February 16, 1855.

MY DEAR MARY:—

It is not from the want of warm affection that I do not write to you oftener. I shall ever feel the deepest interest in your welfare and happiness. This omission on my part arises simply from the fact that Harriet and yourself

are in constant correspondence, and through her you hear all the news from London, and I often hear of you. I am rejoiced that you are contented and happy. May you ever be so!

I have determined to return home in October next, God willing, and to pass the remnant of my days, if Heaven should prolong them, in tranquillity and retirement. After a long and somewhat stormy public life, I enjoy this prospect as much as I have ever done the anticipation of high office.

England is now in a state of mourning for the loss of so many of her brave sons in the Crimea. The approaching "season" will, in consequence, be dull, and this I shall bear with Christian fortitude. The duller the better for me; but not so for Harriet. She has enjoyed herself very much, and made many friends; but I do not see any bright prospect of her marriage. This may probably be her own fault. I confess that nothing would please me better than to see her married, with her own hearty good will, to a worthy man. Should I be called away, her situation would not by any means be comfortable.

We are treated with much civility here, indeed with kindness, according to the English fashion, which is not very cordial. Such a thing as social visiting does not exist even among near friends. You cannot "drop in of an evening" anywhere. You must not go to any place unless you are expected, except it be a formal morning call. . . . .

It is said that the queen is, and it is certain the British people are, deeply mortified at the disasters of her troops in the Crimea. If the men had died in battle this would have been some consolation, but they have been sacrificed by the mismanagement of officials in high authority. The contrast between the condition of the French and English troops in the Crimea has deeply wounded British pride. Indeed, I am sorry for it myself, because it would be unfortunate for the world should England sink to the level of a second-rate power. They call us their "cousins on the other side of the Atlantic," and it is certain we are kindred. . . . .

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

## CHAPTER V.

1853—1856.

NEGOTIATIONS WITH LORD CLARENDON—THE CLAYTON-BULWER TREATY  
AND AFFAIRS IN CENTRAL AMERICA—THE CRIMEAN WAR AND THE  
NEW BRITISH DOCTRINE RESPECTING THE PROPERTY OF NEUTRALS.

THE reader has seen that when Mr. Buchanan left home to undertake the duties of United States minister in England, it was the understanding between the President and himself that he should have full power to deal with the Central American question in London, and that the fishery and reciprocity trade questions would be reserved to be dealt with by the Secretary of State.\*

But of course the President expected to be informed from time to time of the steps taken in the negotiation concerning the affairs of Central America, and Mr. Buchanan both expected and desired to receive specific instructions on this and all other topics in the relations of the two governments that might be discussed in the course of his mission. It was at a very interesting and critical period in the affairs of Europe that he arrived in England. Although the war between England and France, as allies of Turkey, on the one side, and Russia on the other, known as the Crimean war, was still in the distance, its probability was already discernible. How this great disturbance affected the pending questions between the United States and England, and introduced a new and unexpected difficulty in their relations, will appear as I proceed.

Mr. Buchanan, according to his invariable habit in all important transactions, kept the records of his mission with

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\* Full powers in regard to the Central American question were afterwards transmitted to him at London.



great care. Transcripts of the whole are now before me, in two large MS. volumes; and they form a monument of his industry, his powerful memory, and his ability as a diplomatist. The greater part of his negotiations with Lord Clarendon were carried on in oral discussions at official but informal interviews. Regular protocols of these discussions were not made, but they were fully and minutely reported by Mr. Buchanan to Mr. Marey, as they occurred; and it is most remarkable with what completeness, after holding a long conversation, he could record an account of it. These conversations show, too, how wide was his range of vision in regard to the affairs of Europe, of Cuba, of Central America, and of all the topics which he had to discuss; how well versed he was in public law, and how thoroughly equipped he was for the position which he occupied. It is not strange that he should have left in the minds of the public men in England who had most to do with him, an impression that he was a statesman of no common order.\* His first official interview with Lord Clarendon took place on the 22d of September, 1853. It had been, and continued to be, very difficult to get the attention of the English secretary to the questions pending between the United States and England, on account of the critical state of the Turkish question; and when Lord Clarendon did have a conference with Mr. Buchanan, he did not profess to be so well informed on the affairs of Central America as he felt that he ought to be, although Mr. Buchanan found him attentive, courteous and able. In the course of many interviews, occurring from time to time between the 22d of September, 1853, and the 16th of March, 1854, at which last date Lord Clarendon communicated to Mr. Buchanan the declaration which had been prepared for the queen's signature, specifying the course which she intended to pursue towards neutral commerce during the war with Russia, then already declared,—topics that are now of great historical interest, and some of which have still a practical importance, were discussed with great frankness and urbanity. They related at first to the

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\* I cannot find room in this volume for these very interesting and graphic despatches. It is not improbable that the two volumes of this biography will be followed by a supplemental volume, in which they can be fully given. The Government of the United States has never published more than a small part of them.

Central American questions, and the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, the fisheries and reciprocity of trade, Cuba and its slavery, slavery in the United States, and the inter-state relations of Europe. As the war approached, and when it was finally declared, the principles of neutrality, privateering, and many other topics came within the range of the discussion; and it was very much in consequence of the views expressed by Mr. Buchanan to Lord Clarendon, and by the latter communicated to the British cabinet, that the course of England towards neutrals during that war became what it was. When Lord Clarendon, on the 16th of March, 1854, presented to Mr. Buchanan a *projet* for a treaty between Great Britain, France and the United States, making it piracy for neutrals to serve on board of privateers cruising against the commerce of either of the three nations, when such nation was a belligerent, the very impressive reasons which Mr. Buchanan opposed to it caused it to be abandoned.\*

Thursday, March 16, 1854.

Called at the Foreign Office by the invitation of Lord Clarendon. He presented me a printed treaty in blank, which he proposed should be executed by Great Britain, France and the United States. The chief object of it was that all captains of privateers and their crews should be considered and punished as pirates, who, being subjects or citizens of one of the three nations who were neutral, should cruise against either of the others when belligerent. The object undoubtedly was to prevent Americans from taking service in Russian privateers during the present war. We had much conversation on the subject, which I do not mean to repeat, this memorandum being merely intended to refresh my own memory. His lordship had before him a list of the different treaties between the United States and other nations on this subject.

I was somewhat taken by surprise, though I stated my objections pretty clearly to such a treaty. Not having done justice to the subject in my own opinion, I requested and obtained an interview for the next day, when I stated them more fully and clearly. The heads were as follows:

1. It would be a violation of our neutrality in the war to agree with France and England that American citizens who served on board Russian privateers should be punished as pirates. To prevent this, Russia should become a party to the treaty, which, under existing circumstances, was impossible.

2. Our treaties only embraced a person of either nation who should take

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\* I find in Mr. Buchanan's private memorandum book the account of this matter in his handwriting, given in the text. It is much more full than that contained in his despatches to Mr. Marcy.

commissions as privateers, and *did not extend to the crew*. Sailors were a thoughtless race, and it would be cruel and unjust to punish them as pirates for taking such service, when they often might do it from want and necessity.

3. The British law claims all who are born as British subjects to be British subjects forever. We naturalize them and protect them as American citizens. If the treaty were concluded, and a British cruiser should capture a Russian privateer with a naturalized Irishman on board, what would be the consequence? The British law could not punish him as an American citizen under the treaty, because it would regard him as a British subject. It might hang him for high treason; and such an event would produce a collision between the two countries. The old and dangerous question would then be presented in one of its worst aspects.

4. Whilst such a treaty might be justly executed by such nations as Great Britain and the United States, would it be just, wise or humane to agree that their sailors who took service on board a privateer should be summarily tried and executed as pirates by several powers which could be named?

5. *Cui bono* should Great Britain make such a treaty with France during the existing war. If no neutral power should enter into it with them, it could have no effect during its continuance.

6. The time may possibly come when Great Britain, in a war with the despotisms of Europe, might find it to be exceedingly to her interest to employ American sailors on board her privateers, and such a treaty would render this impossible. Why should she unnecessarily bind her hands?

7. The objections of the United States to enter into entangling alliances with European nations.

8. By the law of nations, as expounded both in British and American courts, a commission to a privateer, regularly issued by a belligerent nation, protects both the captain and the crew from punishment as pirates. Would the different commercial nations of the earth be willing to change this law as you propose, especially in regard to the crew? Would it be proper to do so in regard to the latter?

After I had stated these objections at some length on Friday, the 17th of March, Lord Clarendon observed that when some of them were stated the day before, they had struck him with so much force after reflection, that he had come to the office from the House of Lords at night and written them down and sent them to Sir James Graham. In his own opinion the treaty ought not to be concluded, and if the cabinet came to this conclusion the affair should drop, and I agreed I would not write to the Department on the subject. If otherwise, and the treaty should be presented to the Government of the United States, then I was to report our conversation.

In the conversation Lord Clarendon said they were more solicitous to be on good terms with the United States than any other nation, and that the project had not yet been communicated even to France.

(Vide 1 Kent's Commentaries, 100. United States Statutes at large, 175,

Act of March 3d, 1847, to provide for the punishment of piracy in certain cases. Mr. Polk's message to Congress of December 8, 1846.)

General conversation about privateering.

The object of the treaty was to change the law of nations in this respect, and Lord Clarendon said that if England, France and the United States should enter into it, the others would soon follow. The project contained a stipulation that the person who took a commission as a privateer should give security that he would not employ any persons as sailors on board who were not subjects or citizens of the nation granting the commission.

March 22, 1854. At her majesty's drawing-room this day, Lord Clarendon told me that they had given up the project of the treaty, etc., etc.

The whole object of the negotiation in reference to the affairs of Central America was to develop and ascertain the precise differences between the two governments in regard to the construction of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty. As the negotiation had become interrupted by the war with Russia, and as it was not probable that it could be brought to a definite issue while that war continued, Mr. Buchanan desired to return home. But Mr. Marcy earnestly desired him to remain, saying in answer to his request to be relieved: "The negotiation cannot be committed to any one who so well understands the subject in all its bearings as you do, or who can so ably sustain and carry out the views of the United States." Mr. Buchanan therefore remained and pressed upon Lord Clarendon a further discussion of the subject, saying in a formal note:

"The President has directed the undersigned, before retiring from his mission, to request from the British government a statement of the positions which it has determined to maintain in regard to the Bay Islands, the territory between the Sibun and Sarstoon, as well as the Belize settlement and the Mosquito protectorate. The long delay in asking for this information has proceeded from the President's reluctance to manifest any impatience on this important subject whilst the attention of her Majesty's government was engaged by the war with Russia. But as more than a year has already elapsed since the termination of the discussion on these subjects, and as the first session of the new Congress is speedily approaching, the President does not feel that he would be justified in any longer delay."

There had been submitted by Mr. Buchanan to Lord Clarendon on the 6th of January, 1854, a detailed statement of the views of the United States, which was not answered until the

2d of May following. On the 22d of July Mr. Buchanan made an elaborate reply, containing a historical review of all the matters in dispute. It reduced the whole controversy respecting the Clayton-Bulwer treaty to the following points:

What, then, is the fair construction of the article? It embraces two objects. 1. It declares that neither of the parties shall ever acquire any exclusive control over the ship canal to be constructed between the Atlantic and the Pacific, by the route of the river San Juan de Nicaragua, and that neither of them shall ever erect or maintain any fortifications commanding the same or in the vicinity thereof. In regard to this stipulation, no disagreement is known to exist between the parties. But the article proceeds further in its mutually self-denying policy, and in the second place, declares that neither of the parties 'will occupy, or fortify, or colonize, or assume, or exercise any dominion over Nicaragua, Costa Rica, the Mosquito coast, or any part of Central America.'

We now reach the true point. Does this language require that Great Britain shall withdraw from her existing possessions in Central America, including 'the Mosquito coast?' The language peculiarly applicable to this coast will find a more appropriate place in a subsequent portion of these remarks.

If any person enters into a solemn and explicit agreement that he will not "occupy" any given tract of country then actually occupied by him, can any proposition be clearer, than that he is bound by his agreement to withdraw from such occupancy? Were this not the case, these words would have no meaning, and the agreement would become a mere nullity. Nay more, in its effect it would amount to a confirmation of the party in the possession of that very territory which he had bound himself not to occupy, and would practically be equivalent to an agreement that he should remain in possession—a contradiction in terms. It is difficult to comment on language which appears so plain, or to offer arguments to prove that the meaning of words is not directly opposite to their well-known signification.

And yet the British government consider that the convention interferes with none of their existing possessions in Central America; that it is entirely prospective in its nature, and merely prohibits them from making new acquisitions. If this be the case, then it amounts to a recognition of their rights, on the part of the American Government, to all the possessions which they already hold, whilst the United States have bound themselves by the very same instrument, never, under any circumstances, to acquire the possession of a foot of territory in Central America. The mutuality of the convention would thus be entirely destroyed; and whilst Great Britain may continue to hold nearly the whole eastern coast of Central America, the United States have abandoned the right for all future time to acquire any territory, or to receive into the American Union any of the states in that portion of their own continent. This self-imposed prohibition was the great objection to the treaty in

the United States at the time of its conclusion, and was powerfully urged by some of the best men in the country. Had it then been imagined that whilst it prohibited the United States from acquiring territory, under any possible circumstances, in a portion of America through which their thoroughfares to California and Oregon must pass, and that the convention, at the same time, permitted Great Britain to remain in the occupancy of all her existing possessions in that region, there would not have been a single vote in the American Senate in favor of its ratification. In every discussion it was taken for granted that the convention required Great Britain to withdraw from these possessions, and thus place the parties upon an exact equality in Central America. Upon this construction of the convention there was quite as great an unanimity of opinion as existed in the House of Lords, that the convention with Spain of 1786 required Great Britain to withdraw from the Mosquito protectorate.

As Lord Clarendon in his statement had characterized "the Monroe Doctrine" as merely the "dictum of its distinguished author," Mr. Buchanan replied that "did the occasion require, he would cheerfully undertake the task of justifying the wisdom and policy of the Monroe doctrine, in reference to the nations of Europe as well as to those on the American continent;" and he closed as follows:

But no matter what may be the nature of the British claim to the country between the Sibun and the Sarstoon, the observation already made in reference to the Bay Islands and the Mosquito coast must be reiterated, that the great question does not turn upon the validity of this claim previous to the convention of 1850, but upon the facts that Great Britain has bound herself by this convention not to occupy any part of Central America, nor to exercise dominion over it; and that the territory in question is within Central America, even under the most limited construction of these words. In regard to Belize proper, confined within its legitimate boundaries, under the treaties of 1783 and 1786, and limited to the usufruct specified in these treaties, it is necessary to say but a few words. The Government of the United States will not, for the present, insist upon the withdrawal of Great Britain from this settlement, provided all the other questions between the two governments concerning Central America can be amicably adjusted. It has been influenced to pursue this course partly by the declaration of Mr. Clayton on the 4th of July, 1850, but mainly in consequence of the extension of the license granted by Mexico to Great Britain, under the treaty of 1826, which that republic has yet taken no steps to terminate.

It is, however, distinctly to be understood that the Government of the United States acknowledge no claim of Great Britain within Belize, except the temporary 'liberty of making use of the wood of the different kinds, the

fruits and other products in their natural state,' fully recognizing that the former 'Spanish sovereignty over the country' now belongs either to Guatemala or Mexico.

In conclusion, the Government of the United States most cordially and earnestly unite in the desire expressed by 'her majesty's government, not only to maintain the convention of 1850 intact, but to consolidate and strengthen it by strengthening and consolidating the friendly relations which it was calculated to cement and perpetuate.' Under these mutual feelings, it is deeply to be regretted that the two governments entertain opinions so widely different in regard to its true effect and meaning.

In this attitude the controversy was necessarily left by Mr. Buchanan, when his mission finally terminated ; and its further history, so far as he is concerned in it, belongs to the period when he had become President of the United States.

## CHAPTER VI.

1853—1856.

BRITISH ENLISTMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES—RECALL OF THE ENGLISH MINISTER AT WASHINGTON—THE OSTEND CONFERENCE.

TWO topics entirely unexpected by Mr. Buchanan when he accepted the mission to England must here claim some attention. The first relates to an occurrence which brought upon the United States the necessity of demanding a recall of the British minister who then represented the queen's government at Washington. This was Mr. John F. Crampton, a well-meaning and amiable gentleman, who had long resided in this country as secretary of the British legation, and had been made minister some time previously, but whose zeal in the service of his government had led him into a distinct violation of our neutrality in the war between England and Russia. It is altogether probable that in his efforts to promote enlistments of men to serve in that war, Mr. Crampton did not keep within the letter of his instructions. It was, at all events, somewhat difficult, for a good while, to convince Lord Clarendon that Mr. Crampton was personally implicated in the unlawful acts which were undoubtedly done. But there was but one course for the American government to pursue. The history of this affair is somewhat curious.

When in April, 1854, Mr. Marcy had occasion to acknowledge the receipt from Mr. Crampton of a note stating the new rule that would be observed by Great Britain, in the war with Russia, towards neutrals, after expressing his gratification, and, at the same time, saying that the United States would have been still more gratified if the rule that "free ships make free goods" had been extended to all future wars to which Great Britain should be a party, he took the precaution to remind Mr. Crampton in courteous terms of the severe restrictions



imposed by our laws against equipping privateers, receiving commissions, or enlisting men within our territories to take any part in a foreign war. Lord Clarendon, too, at a later period (April 12, 1855), wrote to Mr. Crampton that "the law of the United States, with respect to enlistment, however conducted, is not only very just but very stringent, according to the report which is enclosed in your despatch, and her Majesty's government would on no account run any risk of infringing this law of the United States."\* For a time, Mr. Crampton acted cautiously, but in the course of the summer of 1855, Mr. Marcy received evidence which convinced him that the British minister was personally implicated in carrying out arrangements for sending men to Nova Scotia, under contracts made in the United States to enlist as soldiers in the British army after their arrival in Halifax; and that the means for sending them had been supplied by him and other British functionaries. Mr. Buchanan was first instructed to bring this matter to the attention of Lord Clarendon, before Mr. Crampton's direct agency in it had become known to our Government. His letter of July 6, 1855, to Lord Clarendon, was a forcible presentation of the grounds on which the United States complained of such doings as an infraction of their laws and a violation of their sovereignty. A long correspondence ensued, which was conducted at times with some approach to acrimony, but which never actually transcended the limits of diplomatic courtesy. At length the proofs that Mr. Crampton was a party to this unlawful proceeding became so forcible that the British government yielded to the request that he might be recalled, and he was transferred to another diplomatic post. The whole affair was attended at one time with serious risk of an interruption in the friendly relations of the two countries. Mr. Marcy's course in the correspondence was greatly tempered in its tone by the advice which he received from Mr. Buchanan, although the hazard of an unfortunate issue of the trouble was much enhanced by the sending of an unusual naval force to the coasts of the United States, which the British government ordered while this affair was pending, but without any special reference to it.

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\* A copy of this note was delivered to Mr. Marcy in the course of the month of May, 1855.

The so-called "Ostend Conference," which at the time it occurred made a great deal of noise, and in which Mr. Buchanan was directed by his Government to participate, requires but a brief explanation. It was not a meeting in any sense suggested by him, nor was there anything connected with it which should have given rise to alarm. When in the summer of 1856 he had become the nominee of the Democratic party for the Presidency, as is usual on such occasions, biographical sketches of his public and private character were prepared and circulated. Among them was a small volume in duodecimo form of 118 pages, written with far greater ability and precision than was common in such ephemeral publications intended for electioneering purposes. Its account of the whole matter of the "Ostend Conference" is so exact and lucid that I do not hesitate to quote it as a true history of that proceeding.\*

#### THE OSTEND CIRCULAR.

It is the rare good fortune of Mr. Buchanan to have sustained a long career of public life with such singular discretion, integrity, and ability, that now, when he is presented by the great national party of the country as their candidate for the highest dignity in the Republic, nothing is seriously urged by political hostility in extenuation of his merit, save the alleged countenance to filibuster enterprise and cupidity, inferred by his enemies from a strained interpretation of the recommendations and views of the Ostend Conference. The political opponents of Mr. Buchanan call upon his supporters to vindicate the claim they assert in behalf of Mr. Buchanan to conservatism, by reconciling that assumption with his participation in the American Diplomatic Conference at Ostend and Aix la Chapelle, and with his adoption and endorsement, jointly with the ministers of the United States to France and Spain, of the views and recommendations addressed by the three ambassadors to the Department of State, on the 18th of October, 1854, in the letter commonly known as the Ostend Manifesto. The circumstance that the opposition meet the nomination of Mr. Buchanan with no other objection impugning his qualifications for the Presidential trust, cannot fail to confirm the popular belief in the justice and wisdom of the judgment that governed the Cincinnati convention in selecting a statesman so unassailable in the record of his political life, and so little obnoxious to personal censure and distrust, as the candidate

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\* The copy of this little biography which is before me is entitled, **THE LIFE AND PUBLIC SERVICES OF JAMES BUCHANAN** of Pennsylvania. Twentieth thousand. New York: Published by Livermore & Rudd, 310 Broadway, 1856. It was published anonymously, but I am informed that the name of the author was Edward F. Underhill.

of the great national party of the Union for the highest dignity in the Republic. For it is demonstrable that an erroneous impression exists as to the purport of the Aix la Chapelle letter; and that the policy therein declared by Mr. Buchanan and his associates, is identical with that which has uniformly been regarded and avowed as the policy of the United States in respect to the Island of Cuba. And a belief endeavored to be inculcated, that the policy of the Ostend conference was adopted in consultation or co-operation with the Red Republicans of Europe, is equally erroneous. This belief has originated in another supposition equally unfounded, that Mr. Soulé was in league with the leaders of the European revolutionary movement. The truth is, that fundamental differences existed between the policy of Mr. Soulé and Mazzini, Ledru Rollin, Kossuth, and Louis Blanc; and besides which fact it is well known that these revolutionary leaders themselves were agreed only upon one point, the necessity of revolution, and that they seldom speak to one another. The policy of the revolutionary party of Europe in reference to Cuba was this. They desired the United States to assist the Democratic party of Spain in creating a revolution at Madrid, which should dethrone the queen, and place the Democratic party in power, by the establishment of a republic, and then leave Cuba at her option to either remain a portion of the Spanish republic, or seek annexation to the United States. This concession to the United States was to be in return for material aid furnished in effecting the Spanish revolution. The revolution thus accomplished was intended to be the initiative of further revolutions on the Continent. The Pyrenees range of mountains which forms the boundary line between France and Spain are populated on either side by the most liberal men in either empire, the great mass of the inhabitants being Republican; and could a republic be established in Spain, the Pyrenees would not only furnish points from which to begin their revolutionary designs against France, but would form a barrier behind which they could defend themselves against any attack which Louis Napoleon might make. The revolution accomplished in France, Kossuth and Mazzini would have but little difficulty in overthrowing the power of Austria in Hungary and Italy. Such were the objects which the revolutionary leaders of Europe had in view in endeavoring to secure the influence of the United States Government in support of their policy.

It is needless to say, that neither the Ostend conference nor the cabinet at Washington gave any countenance to this policy. The Ostend conference looked at the Cuba question solely from an American point of view, and quite disconnected from the conflicts and interests of European politics, or the aspirations of revolutionary leaders. On this account, so far from that policy receiving the favor of the Red Republicans, they were as pointed in their hostility to it as any of the monarchical organs of Europe, and did not hesitate to privately, and sometimes publicly, denounce Mr. Soulé for having signed the Ostend circular, as recreant to the expectations which they had formed in regard to him. Mr. Buchanan from first to last opposed the policy which would lead to the United States becoming involved in the European struggle,

and held strictly to the American view of the question, in accordance with which the Ostend letter was framed.

The conference at Ostend had its origin in the recommendation of Governor Marcy, who justly conceived that the mission with which Mr. Soulé was charged at the court of Spain might excite the jealousy of other European powers, and that it was important for the purpose of facilitating the negotiations there to be conducted, that explanations should be made to the governments of England and France, of the objects and purposes of the United States in any movement that events might render necessary, having in view the ultimate purchase or acquisition by this government of the Spanish Island of Cuba. The object of the consultation suggested by Mr. Marcy was, as stated in a letter to Mr. Soulé, "to bring the common wisdom and knowledge of the three ministers to bear simultaneously upon the negotiations at Madrid, London and Paris." These negotiations had not necessarily in view the transfer of Cuba to this country; though that was one of the modes indicated, and seemingly the most effective, of terminating the constantly recurring grievances upon the commerce of the United States, upon the honor of its flag, and the personal rights of its citizens, which disturbed the cordial relations of the two countries, and infused acrimony into their intercourse connected with the prosecution of commerce. Another expedient which Governor Marcy regarded with favor, was the independence of the Island under the Creole sovereignty. At that time, in the summer of 1854, apprehensions of some important change in the social and political condition and relations of Cuba, were generally felt in this country. Rumors prevailed, founded on the then recent decrees and modifications of law pertaining to the servile condition, that it was in contemplation to establish the domination of the blacks in the Island; that the slaves were to be freed and armed, and that an extensive introduction of native Africans was to be resorted to as a means of re-enforcing the strength of the dominant party.

Such, indeed, was the policy of Great Britain; first, to keep alive the slavery agitation in the United States, not from motives of philanthropy, but, by thus inciting internal discord between the people of different sections of the Union, the United States would be prevented from turning its attention to further schemes of territorial extension; and second, to flood Cuba with negroes under a system of apprenticeship, in order to render it valueless to the United States. The execution of such a scheme was regarded as eminently dangerous to the peace and safety of this country, and was one which the United States could not suffer, as the inevitable effects of such a policy, carried out, would be, sooner or later, to induce a servile insurrection in the Southern States. With a colony containing a million and a half of free negroes, immediately off our shores, an expedition could at any time be organized under European aid, and sent from Cuba to our Southern States to incite a rebellion, with all its attendant horrors, among the slaves. Mr. Soulé was instructed to ascertain whether it was in contemplation, and, if so, to seek to prevent it from being carried out, and to avert its baleful consequences to

ourselves, by negotiating, first, for the purchase of Cuba, and if that were impracticable, then for the independence of the Island. It was not the greed of territorial expansion that prompted the instructions which convoked the Ostend conference; nor was that sentiment the controlling one that prompted the adoption by its members of the recommendations embodied in the Aix la Chapelle letter. The document is too long to publish at length, but the material passage which contains the doctrines which the opposition would fain lead the people to believe are dangerous, is subjoined :

“But if Spain, deaf to the voice of her own interest, and actuated by stubborn pride and a false sense of honor, should refuse to sell Cuba to the United States, then the question will arise, what ought to be the course of the American Government under such circumstances? Self-preservation is the first law of nature with states as well as with individuals. All nations have at different periods acted upon this maxim. Although it has been made the pretext for committing flagrant injustice, as in the partition of Poland, and other similar cases which history records, yet the principle itself, though often abused, has always been recognized. The United States has never acquired a foot of territory except by fair purchase, or, as in the case of Texas, upon the free and voluntary application of the people of that independent state, who desired to blend their destinies with our own. Even our acquisitions from Mexico are no exception to the rule, because, although we might have claimed them by the right of conquest, in a just war, yet we purchased them for what was then considered by both parties a full and ample equivalent. Our past history forbids that we should acquire the Island of Cuba without the consent of Spain, unless justified by the great law of self-preservation. We must, in any event, preserve our own conscious rectitude and our own self-respect.

“While pursuing this course, we can afford to disregard the censure of the world, to which we have been so often and so unjustly exposed. After we shall have offered Spain a price for Cuba far beyond its present value, and this shall have been refused, it will then be time to consider the question, does Cuba in the possession of Spain seriously endanger our internal peace and the existence of our cherished Union? Should this question be answered in the affirmative, then, by every law, human and divine, we shall be justified in wresting it from Spain, if we possess the power. And this, upon the very same principle that would justify an individual in tearing down the burning house of his neighbor if there were no other means of preventing the flames from destroying his own home. Under such circumstances, we ought neither to count the cost nor regard the odds which Spain might enlist against us.

“We forbear to enter into the question whether the present condition of the Island would justify such a measure. We should, however, be recreant to our duty—be unworthy of our gallant forefathers, and commit base treason against our posterity, should we permit Cuba to be Africanized and to become a second St. Domingo, with all its attendant horrors to the white race, and suffer the flames to extend to our neighboring shores, seriously to endanger

or actually to consume the fair fabric of our Union. We fear that the course and current of events are rapidly tending towards such a catastrophe. . .

“JAMES BUCHANAN,

“JOHN Y. MASON,

“PIERRE SOULÉ.

“Aix la Chapelle, October 18, 1854.”

One brief sentence in the above describes the purport and substance of the whole document: “Our past history forbids that we should acquire the Island of Cuba without the consent of Spain, unless justified by the great law of self-preservation.” If the acquisition of the Island should become the very condition of our existence, then if Spain shall refuse to part with it for a price “far beyond its present value,” we shall be justified “in wresting it” from her, “upon the very same principle that would justify an individual in tearing down the burning house of his neighbor, if there were no other means of preventing the flames from destroying his own home.”

This doctrine is not original with the Ostend conference, nor did it emanate from filibustering cupidity, nor is it a mere party issue. It has been as broadly asserted, and as confidently and ably advocated, by a Whig statesman and administration, as in the Ostend manifesto. Mr. Everett, United States Secretary of State, in his letter to the British and French ministers declining the alliance tendered by them to guarantee the possession of Cuba to Spain for all coming time, defends his refusal, on the ground that the United States have an interest in the condition of Cuba which may justify her in assuming dominion over it—an interest in comparison with which that of England and France dwindles into insignificance.

The truth is, that its doctrines are the reverse of filibusterism, which means an unlawful, unauthorized depredation of individuals on the territory of countries with which we are at peace. The Ostend circular recommends no suspension or repeal of the neutrality laws, no modifications of the restrictions imposed by our traditional policy and statutes upon the acts of individuals who choose to filibuster; but it declares that, whenever an occasion arrives for a hostile act against the territory of any other nation, it must be by the sovereign act of the nation, through its regular army and navy. So inconsistent are the doctrines of the Ostend circular with filibusterism, that the publication of that document resulted in the cessation of all filibustering attempts against Cuba. But this is not the only result. The acts of aggression upon our citizens and our commerce, by the authorities in Cuba, prior to the Ostend conference, were of a character to seriously imperil the relations between the two countries. But since the Ostend conference, most of those difficulties have been settled, and the remainder are now in the course of settlement; and as the legitimate result of the bold and determined policy enunciated at Ostend, there has not since been a single outrage against the rights of our citizens in Cuba. A vacillating or less determined course on the part of our ministers would have only invited further aggression.

Thus it will be seen that the letter upon which the charge is based by no means justifies the imputation. It only proves that, under circumstances threatening actual danger to the Republic, and in order to preserve its existence, the United States would be "justified, by the great law of self-preservation," in acquiring the Island of Cuba without the consent of Spain. In its careful preclusion of filibustering intent and assumption, it shows the predominance of a conservative influence in the Congress, which the country may safely attribute to the weight of Mr. Buchanan's counsels and character. It is obviously manifest from the tenor of the document, that the construction so sedulously contended for by the opponents of Democratic rule, is that which was most earnestly deprecated by the prevailing sentiment of its framers. Events were then in progress, and a perilous catastrophe seemed to impend, that asked of American statesmanship the exercise of all the decision, prudence and energy at its command, to regulate and guide the one in such a way as, if possible, to stay or avert the other. The local administration in Cuba had become alarmed for its safety, and, influenced by apprehension and terror of American filibusters, had already adopted measures of indiscriminating aggression upon the United States Government, by dishonoring its flag and violating the rights of its citizens, which, if persisted in, would inevitably have led to war. Nor was this the only danger; for it was industriously affirmed by those in the interests of Spanish rule, that the Island was to be "Africanized," and delivered over to "an internal convulsion which should renew the horrors and the fate of St. Domingo"—an event to which, as Mr. Everett truly declares in his letter to the British and French ministers, declining the proposed alliance to guarantee Cuba to Spain, both France and England would prefer any change in the condition of that Island—not excepting even its acquisition by the United States. Under the circumstances, nothing less than so decided a manifestation of determined energy and purpose as was made through the instrumentality of the Ostend conference, would probably have prevailed to prevent that very struggle for the conquest of Cuba, which it is now alleged to have been its purpose to precipitate. And thus, as often happens in the conduct of affairs, the decision and firmness which seemed aggressive and menacing, facilitated a pacific and satisfactory solution of difficulties that threatened war.

## CHAPTER VII.

1854—1855.

THE SOCIAL POSITION OF MR. BUCHANAN AND HIS NIECE IN ENGLAND.

THE social position of Mr. Buchanan and his niece in England can be described only by making extracts from letters. Miss Lane joined her uncle in London in the spring of 1854, and remained with him until the autumn of 1855. An American minister at the English court, at periods of exciting and critical questions between the two nations, is very likely to experience a considerable variation in the social barometer. But the strength of Mr. Buchanan's character, and the agreeable personal qualities which were in him united with the gravity of years and an experience of a very uncommon kind, overcame at all times any tendency to social unpleasantness that might have been caused by national feelings excited by temporary causes. Letters written by Miss Lane from England to her sister Mrs. Baker have been placed in my hands. From such letters, written in the freedom of sisterly affection, I can take but very few extracts. Many most eligible opportunities occurred which might have fixed the fate of this young lady away from her own land; and it appears from one of her uncle's letters that after her return to America a very exalted personage expressed regret that she had not been "detained" in England. It was entirely from her own choice that she was not.

[MISS LANE TO MRS. BAKER.]

56 HARLEY STREET, LONDON, Friday Feb. 9, 1855.

I have no letter from you, dearest sister, since I last wrote, but shall continue my fortnightly correspondence, though my letters are written so hastily that they are not what they should be. We are luxuriating in a deep snow, with a prospect of being housed, as nobody thinks of sleighing in England—



indeed there are no sleighs. I returned home on Friday last, and really spent four weeks near Liverpool most happily, and truly regretted when our charming trio was broken up—we were so joyous and happy together. . . . . Mr. and Mrs. Brown and Miss Hargraves camp up with me, and Laly, after remaining a few days at the hotel, came to stay with me. She will remain until Thursday, and is a sweet, dear girl.

To my great regret Mr. Welsh talks of going to the United States on the 24th. I hope he may yet change his mind, for I shall miss him so much, as there is no one in the legation I can call upon with the same freedom as I do on him. Our secretary is not yet appointed; it is said Mr. Appleton has received an offer of the place; if he should come, uncle will be perfectly satisfied, as he was his first choice. The Lawrences talk of going upon the continent in March. . . . . Mr. Mason continues to get better, but I would not be surprised to hear of their anticipated return, as I am sure his health would be much better in Virginia than in Paris. . . . .

They have had great trouble here in forming a new ministry, and I am sorry Lord Aberdeen has gone out, as he is a great friend of the United States, and Lord Palmerston, the new prime minister, is not. London is still dull, but begins to fill up more since Parliament is in session. The war affects everything; there are no drawing-rooms announced as yet, and it is doubted whether there will be any, at least until after Easter. The queen returns to town the middle of this month. Uncle is well, and seems to escape the cold that is so prevalent. There are few Americans here now, and the "Arctic" will deter them from crossing in such numbers to the World's Fair in Paris in May. We have had canvas-back duck sent us lately, and it really takes one quite home again. How you would have enjoyed them. Do you have them in California? Mr. ——— still continues in London. He has called since my return, but unfortunately I was not at home; however I like his remaining so long in London with no other attraction. . . . . ——— was in London for two hours the other day, and passed one here. His sister continues very ill. Do write me often, dear sister. I dare say your time is much occupied now, but send a few lines.

MARCH 2d, 1855.

I did not send you a letter last week, dear sister, for I was not very well and writing fatigued me. I am much better now, and as the weather has become much milder, I hope my cold will pass entirely off. I have your letters of Dec. 31st and Jan. 15th, and think you have indeed been lucky in presents. There is not much of that among grown persons here; they keep Christmas gaily, and the children receive the presents. . . . .

Every thing is worn in Paris standing out. Skirts cannot be too full and stiff; sleeves are still open, and basque bodies, either open in front or closed; flounces are very much worn. I had some dresses made in Paris that I wish you could see.

Uncle wrote you ten days ago, direct to California. He is in good health

and spirits, and likes much to hear from you. We have dined with the queen since I wrote. Her invitations are always short, and as the court was in mourning and I had no black dress, one day's notice kept me very busy. . . . I ought to have black dresses, for the court is often in mourning, and you know I belong to it; but the season being quiet, I did not expect to go out to any court parties. The queen was most gracious, and talked a great deal to me. Uncle sat upon her right hand, and Prince Albert was talkative, and altogether we passed a charming evening. The Princess-Royal came in after dinner, and is simple, unaffected, and very child-like—her perfect simplicity and sweet manners are charming. Every thing of course was magnificent at the table—gold in profusion, twelve candelabras with four candles each; but you know I never can describe things of this sort. With mirrors and candles all around the room, a band of delicious music playing all the time, it was a little like fairy-land in its magnificence. We had another band after dinner, while we took tea. Every thing is unsettled here about the war and the ministry, and, really, England seems in a bad way at present. It is positively stated that the Emperor Napoleon is going to the Crimea, in opposition to the advice of all his friends.

MARCH 23d, 1855.

I have your bright, cheerful letter of Jan. 31st, dear sister, and rejoice in your good spirits. I have not been quite well for a few weeks, suffering from cold—the weather has been so dreadful—so that I have gone out but little; indeed, there seems to be a gloom over everything in the gay line this year. Archbishop Hughes dined with us on his way to the United States. He spoke of remembering me in Washington at uncle's, where he never saw me, and of course it was you. We have given one large dinner this year, and I am sorry it is time for them to commence. Our old butler, Cates, was ill at the time, and on last Tuesday the honest old creature died. We all felt it very much, as he was a capital servant, and so faithful—my right-hand man. We dined two and twenty on the 10th, English and Americans, and it passed off very well. Wednesday was "fast-day," and universally unpopular. They said, "we fast for the gross mismanagement by the ministers of our affairs in the Crimea," and all such things. There is great satisfaction at the czar's death, and not the same respect paid by the court here that there was in France. Mr. Appleton, our new Secretary, has arrived, and will be presented to her Majesty on Monday. On Thursday, the 29th, will be the first drawing-room. I shall not go. It will not be a full one, as it comes before Easter, and it is rumored that the Emperor and Empress of the French are coming in April. Unless required to present Americans, I shall not go to more than two this year. It is so expensive—one cannot wear the same dress twice. There are usually four during the season.

I have given up all idea of returning home before June, and most likely not until uncle does in October; but I highly approve of your plan to pay us a visit upon our return. As to my going to California, you know how I should

like it for your sake, but uncle would never hear of my taking such a journey. It is different with you; you return to see *every one*. . . . .

APRIL 20th, 1855.

I have yours of February 28th, and am delighted to hear you are so snug and comfortable. Uncle positively talks of my return in June, and he has really been so good and kind that if he thinks it best, I must not oppose it. He is not going to charge me with any money I have drawn, makes me a present of my visit here, and has gratified me in every thing. He gives up his house on the 7th of July, and will go to some place in the country, near London. If he kept it until October, he would have to pay for several months more, and it will economize a little to give it up—every thing is so enormous here. I hope you have better luck about getting to church, as I think you have been living very like a heathen. Much obliged for the postage stamps. There are some alterations in the postage law lately; every thing must be prepaid.

The emperor and empress arrived here on Monday last, and went immediately to Windsor. All London is mad with excitement and enthusiasm, and wherever they move throngs of people follow them. Yesterday they came to Buckingham Palace, and went into the city to be present at a magnificent entertainment at Guildhall. There never was such a crowd seen. In the afternoon at five they received the diplomatic corps at the French Embassy, and I had a long talk with her Majesty, who was most gracious and affable. She is very striking, elegant and graceful. She wore a green silk, flounced to the waist with seven or eight white lace flounces, white lace mantle, and white crape bonnet and feathers. We go to the palace to-night to an evening party, and there I shall even have a better opportunity of seeing them. I was disappointed in the emperor's appearance—he is very short. Last night they accompanied the queen, in state, to the opera, and there was a grand illumination all over the city. I drove out to see it, but there was such a crush of carriages, men, women and children, that I was glad to get home. They were asking from fifty to one hundred guineas for boxes at the opera, and from ten to forty for single stalls. To-morrow the imperial guests depart, and London will again return to its sober senses. There does not seem to be much gaiety in prospect, but really this visit seems to be the only thing thought of. The Masons are not coming to pay me a visit. Betty has gone to Nice with her father, for his health. It is said the queen will go to Paris at the opening of the exposition in May. Ellen Ward's marriage is postponed until the fifth of June, by her father's request. Mr. T. writes he has taken a state-room on the Baltic, which was to sail on the 18th. He has talked of this visit so long that I would not be surprised to hear it ended in nothing. Lu has every thing planned and fixed and *destined* to take place just as she *wishes*, even that I am to be married in my travelling dress and very quietly. I was at the Crystal Palace on Tuesday, which is truly the most fairy-like and exquisitely beautiful thing that could be made. The royal party go there

to-day. The building far exceeds in magnificence the one erecting now in Paris. Mr. ——— has lost his favorite sister, and is in great distress, so I have not seen him for a time. I have made another conquest, who comes in the true American style, *every day*. He is rich and keeps a yacht, which costs him £2000 a year. Beaux are pleasant, but dreadfully troublesome. . . . .

MAY 3d, 1855.

I have yours, dear sister, of March 16th, and really your account of the failures and rascals among your Californians is quite frightful. . . . .

London is looking up in the way of gaiety, though the war is still a sad weight upon many hearts. Yesterday (Wednesday) I attended the second drawing-room of the season. You remember I was not quite well at the first, and did not go. It was a very full and brilliant one. I wore a pink silk petticoat, over-skirts of pink tulle, puffed, and trimmed with wreaths of apple blossoms; train of pink silk, trimmed with blonde and apple blossoms, and so was the body. Head-dress, apple blossoms, lace lappits and feathers.\* There will be one more in celebration of the birth-day on the 19th. Her Majesty was very gracious to me yesterday, as was also the prince. On Wednesday next there is to be a state ball at Buckingham Palace, which we shall of course attend. On Monday Mrs. Shapter and I ran down to Brighton on the sea-side, and returned on Tuesday night. We enjoyed it very much, and I am sure the change was beneficial to both. I had two splendid rides upon horseback along the water. Mrs. Shapter goes away for a week on Saturday, and I shall miss her dreadfully. You have doubtless heard of the attempt to assassinate the Emperor Napoleon since his return from London. The diplomatic corps are invited to be present at the singing of the *Te Deum* in the chapel of the French Embassy on Sunday next, in celebration of the emperor's escape. . . . .

I have seen ———, and he ordered his gardener to send me from the country all the roses he had in bloom, for the drawing-room. Preceding the box came a sweet little note, which I of course answered in a *tender* way. Mr. ———, the man of the yacht, is getting quite desperate, as he is ordered to join his regiment for a month. He is constantly sending me flowers, and after his visit to-day, despatched a magnificent bouquet. He is a very nice fellow, and I really am sorry. . . . . Uncle of course knows and sees every one who comes to the house, and places *such confidence in me* that he gives himself no uneasiness. I have as many beautiful flowers now, as my

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\* On their return home from that drawing-room, Mr. Buchanan said to his niece: "Well, a person would have supposed you were a great beauty, to have heard the way you were talked of to-day. I was asked if we had many such handsome ladies in America. I answered, 'Yes, and many much handsomer. She would scarcely be remarked there for her beauty.'" This anecdote is taken from a book published at New York in 1870, entitled, *LADIES OF THE WHITE HOUSE*, by Laura Carter Holloway. Deducting a little from the somewhat gushing style in which the biographical sketches in this book are written, it is reliable in its main facts, and it does no more than justice to Miss Lane's attractions and to the high consideration in which she was held in English society.

drawing-room can well hold. I wish I could see you, dear Maye, and hope you can come home for a nice long visit when we return. June is still *talked* of for my return. I do not know how it will be. My best love to Mr. B.

FRIDAY, JULY 13th, 1855.

I have not had a letter from you in a long time, and hope "no news is good news." London is going through the usual routine of balls and parties, and has nearly exhausted itself of its yearly labors. Lord Raglan's death has been very much felt, and throws many families into mourning. Miss Steiner, one of the young ladies who stood bridesmaid with me at Miss Jackson's wedding, is now staying with me. She is a sweet girl; came on Wednesday and I think will leave on Monday. Her brother has just returned from America, and expresses himself much pleased with all he saw. We have dined with the Archbishop of Canterbury since I wrote you, which will please Uncle Edward. He lives in Lambeth Palace, the residence of the ancient archbishops, and we dined in the grand baronial reception hall. We have had two large dinners, and give another next Thursday, which will end our large entertainments, I dare say. We went to Oxford the day of the Commemoration, and uncle had conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Civil Law. It was most gratifying and agreeable.\* The same evening the queen gave her last concert, and we were obliged to return to town. The King of the Belgians is now on a visit to the queen, and they have all gone to Osborne. The season is very nearly over, and I am really glad to be done with lengthy dinners and crowded hot balls for a while. I have now . . . . a man of high position, clever and talented, very rich, and the only fault to find is his age, which is certainly great, as he will be sixty next year. He has a daughter who is a widow, and I might pass for *her* daughter. But I really like him very much, and know how devoted he would be. I should have everything to my heart's best satisfaction, and go home as often as I liked. But I will write no more about it. . . . .

Uncle is well and has passed this season remarkably well. I have partially engaged a state-room for August 25th, but scarcely think I will go then. The steamers are going so full now that it is necessary to engage a long time before.

We have been giving Friday evening receptions since June 15th, and next Friday, the 20th, will be the last; we have had six. I hear the exhibition in Paris is improving, and that will bring even more Americans. As Miss Steiner and I are going out, I must stop writing and get ready. How constantly I wish for you, and trust, dear sister, whether I return to America or

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\* This mention of the Commemoration Day at Oxford, where Mr. Buchanan, along with the poet Tennyson, received the degree of D. C. L., does not do justice to the scene. The students, after their fashion, greeted Miss Lane's appearance with loud cheers, and on her uncle they bestowed their applause vociferously.

remain in England, that it will not be many months before I see you once more. Love to Mr. B. and yourself, from

Your ever affectionate

HATTIE.

[TO MRS. BAKER.]

LONDON, October 6, 1854.

MY DEAR MARY:—

I received your letter in due time, of the 14th July, and should have answered it long ere this, but that I knew Harriet wrote to you regularly. I wrote to you soon after my arrival in London, but you have never acknowledged that letter, and as you have said nothing about it in yours of the 14th July, I fear it has miscarried.

If I do not write often it is not because you are not freshly and most kindly remembered. Indeed I feel great anxiety about your health and prosperity, and am rejoiced that you appear to be happy in San Francisco. You are often, very often, a subject of conversation between Harriet and myself.

We set out for Belgium to-morrow, where I have important public business to transact. I take Harriet along to enable her to see a little of the continent, and I may perhaps have time to accompany her along the Rhine.

I cannot be long absent, because the business of this legation is incessant, important, and laborious.

Thank God! I have been enjoying my usual health here, and am treated as kindly as I could have expected. And yet I long to return home, but must remain nearly another year to fulfill my engagement with the President when I most reluctantly consented to accept the mission. Should a kind Providence prolong my days, I hope to pass the remnant of them in tranquillity and retirement at Wheatland. I have been kindly treated by the world, but am heartily sick of public life. Besides a wise man ought to desire to pass some time in privacy before his inevitable doom. . . . .

I hope to be able to take Harriet on a short visit to Paris before her return to the United States. I have but little time to write to-day after my despatches, and determined not to let another post for California pass without writing. Remember me kindly to Mr. Baker, and believe me to be with warm and sincere affection and regard

Your uncle,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[TO MISS LANE IN PARIS.]

LONDON, November 10, 1854.

MY DEAR HARRIET:—

I do not regard the article in the *Pennsylvanian*; but if Mr. Tyson has really become a "know-nothing," this would be a different matter. It would at least, in some degree, modify the high opinion which I had formed of him from his general character and his known ability.

I accompanied Mrs. Lawrence to the new lord mayor's banquet last evening. I got the lady mayoress to substitute her in your place. . . . . There were no ladies of foreign ministers present and none I believe were invited, so that there would have been no other mode of introducing you except through the lady mayoress. The new lord mayor was exceedingly and specially civil to me.

I wish you to make out your visit to Paris. We can get along without you here, though you may think this impossible. Mr. Welsh informs me that Mr. Mason will accompany you home; at this I should be greatly rejoiced. The news, I fear, is too good to be true. Much pleasure as it would afford me to see him, and have him under my roof, I do not wish this unless he desires to pay me a visit of some duration, and see the wonders of London. If it be merely to accompany you and nothing more, it would be another matter. This would be carrying civility too far.

If I have felt anxious about you, just consider the unaccountable marriages which —— and —— have both made.

Many of your friends make kind inquiries after you. With my kindest regards to Mr. and Mrs. Mason and the family, I remain,

Yours affectionately, etc.

LONDON, Jan. 20, 1855.

I have received yours of yesterday. In answer I say, do just as you please and then you will please me best. I desire that whilst you remain in England, you should enjoy yourself prudently and discreetly in the manner most agreeable to yourself. If you desire it, there can be no objection to a visit to Miss Hargreaves.

I send the letters received by the last steamer. I got one myself from Mr. Macalester who says, "Please to say to Miss Harriet that 'Job' will be out in the spring, provided the . . . . gentleman is disposed of (as he could wish) in the interim."

For my part, my impressions are favorable to "Job," although I consider him rather a cold lover to wait for a whole year. He does not know that you will be home in the spring, and that he may spare himself the voyage, nor did I so inform Mr. Macalester.

I dine to-day "en famille" with General D'Oxholme. With my regards to all, I remain,

Yours affectionately, etc.

January 31, 1855.

. . . . . In regard to Miss Hargreaves, our loves are mutual. I admire her very much. Return her my love, with all my heart; but alas! what signifies the love of a man nearly sixty-four.

I have accepted Mr. Atkinson's invitation both for you and myself.

August 18, 1855.

I enclose a letter to you from Mr. H. Randall which I opened, seeing that it came from Manchester, and believing it was about the shawls. I have sent the two shawls mentioned in the letter as requested to Messrs. ——— & Co., and informed Mr. Randall where you are, and that you would not be in London until Monday the 27th instant.

There is no news of any consequence. I dined yesterday with Sir Richard Pakenham at the Traveller's Club, and we had a pleasant time of it. I shall meet him again at dinner on Tuesday next at Count Lavradio's, to which you were also invited.

Sir Richard is a sensible man. He has absolutely resigned, and has only been prevailed upon to attend the coronation of the young king of Portugal as British Minister. He will be back from Lisbon in October. He says he is determined not to wear out his life from home, but pass the remnant of his days among his relatives and friends in Ireland. I am persuaded he has not the least idea of marrying a young wife, though younger than Sir F. He was born in '97 and Sir F. in '96. I am in favor of a considerable disparity between the ages of husband and wife for many reasons, and should be especially so in your case. Still I do not think that your husband ought to be more than double your age.

August 20, 1855.

I enclose you a number of letters, including all received by the "Atlantic." There is one, I presume, from Lady Ouseley. I wrote to her and informed her of the circumstances of your visit to the Isle of Wight, and your intention to pass some time with me at the Star and Garter before proceeding to Lancashire, and our intention then to visit them and Miss Gamble.

I learn by a letter from John H. Houston that poor Jessie is very ill of a typhoid fever, and her recovery doubtful, to say the least. Brother Edward had been sent for, and was expected.

I have received instructions from Governor Marcy on the Central American questions, which render it almost morally certain that from their nature they cannot be executed before the 30th of September; with declarations that I am the most proper person, etc., etc., etc., to carry them into effect, and not a word about my successor. Indeed, Mr. Hunter, the chief clerk, writes me as follows, under date of August 6th: "I hear nothing as to who is to be your successor. It is no doubt a difficult question to decide."

August 23, 1855.

I know nothing at present which will prevent me from accompanying Mr. Appleton to the Isle of Wight. Why should I not occasionally take "a spree" as well as Mr. Shapter? You may, therefore, secure me a room in the hotel, should this be deemed necessary. I shall be there some time on Saturday. Till then, farewell!



August 28, 1855.

I opened a letter for you from Glasgow. It is dated on the 24th, and announces the sending of the two shawls—"grey centre, with black and scarlet border." They have not yet been received, neither had those I returned been received.

There was no letter for you by the "Asia." I send the three last *Heralds*. Poor Mr. Lawrence had been given up.\* There were no longer any hopes of his recovery. Col. L. is still in Paris. His brother and lady are, I understand, in London, and will leave for home by the "Arago," from Southampton, to-morrow.

I had not a word from Washington, official or unofficial—nothing about poor Jessie. We had a very pleasant time on our return from Black Gang Chine, and indeed throughout our excursion. The Shanklin Chine is much more picturesque than the Black Gang affair. No news.

Miss Lane returned to the United States shortly before the date of this letter.

LONDON, October 12, 1855.

MY DEAR HARRIET :—

I have been watching the weather since you departed, and it has been as favorable as I could have desired. If the winds and the waves have been as propitious as my wishes and my hopes induce me to believe, you will have had a delightful voyage. Good luck to you on your native soil! I miss you greatly; but know it was for your good that you should go home in this delightful weather, instead of encountering a winter passage.

Every person I meet has something kind to say of you. You have left a good name behind, and that is something, but not more than you deserve.

Poor Lady Ouseley has lost her son. I have not seen her since this sad event, but of course have called.

I have met Lady Chantrey, Mrs. Shapter, the D'Oxholmes, etc., etc., but need not repeat what they said.

Sir Henry Holland called on Wednesday immediately after his return, and expressed both sorrow and disappointment that he had not seen you before your departure. He desired me to present you his kindest regards, and says, God willing, he will call upon you next summer in the United States.

Take good care not to display any foreign airs and graces in society at home, nor descant upon your intercourse with titled people:—but your own good sense will teach you this lesson. I shall be happy on my return to learn that it has been truly said of you, "she has not been a bit spoiled by her visit to England."

I forgot to tell you I had seen the good duchess, who said many extravagant things about you.

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\* The Honorable Abbot Lawrence, of Boston.

I received a letter from Mrs. Plitt by the last steamer, directed to you, with instructions that if you had left I might open and read and then burn it, all which I have done.

I wrote to Miss Hetty by the Southampton steamer on Wednesday last, and sent two of the *Posts*.

I shall give up the house towards the end of the month. Mr. Appleton now occupies your room, and renders himself quite agreeable.

I have not seen Grey\* since you left; but she says she did put up your slippers in the black bag. I shall make it a point to see her and talk with her before she finally leaves the house. She has been absent, but is backwards and forwards.

I heard nothing from Washington by the last steamer respecting myself. I shall present my letter of recall, and take leave of the queen soon after it arrives. As you know, I am heartily tired of my position. But what then? I do not wish to arrive in the United States before the meeting of Congress. I am uncertain what I shall do, but will always keep you advised, having confidence that you will not talk about my intended movements. . . .

Louis Napoleon at the present moment wields more real power than ever his great uncle did. All the potentates in Europe dread him, and are paying court to him. He has England in leading strings nearly as much as Sardinia. How have the mighty fallen!

Mr. Ward came to the legation to take leave of you a few moments after you left on Friday morning. Consols have been falling, falling continually for the last week, and this makes him melancholy.

Mrs. Shapter promised to write by the steamer. She has arranged the account you left with her in a satisfactory manner. She has not yet sent her letter, which I shall transmit by the bag.

Mrs. Lawrence called this morning to take leave of me. She appears to be much rejoiced at the prospect of getting home.

October 19, 1855.

Whilst I write, I congratulate myself with the belief that under the blessing of Providence, you are again happily in your native land and among kind friends. The passage of the Baltic from New York to Liverpool was one of the smoothest and most agreeable ever made. Hence we have every reason to believe that the Atlantic enjoyed the same favorable weather.

I had a very pretty note from Mrs. Sturgis on the 15th instant, presenting me with a water melon, in which she says: "I was sorry not to say 'good bye' to Miss Lane in person, but we did not forget to drink her health and a prosperous voyage, and we feel how very much we shall miss her and her praises another season.†" Of course I answered this note in a proper manner.

The good but eccentric duchess always speaks of you in terms of warm affection and regard, and sends her kindest love.

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\* Miss Lane's English maid.

† Mrs. Russell Sturgis.

Mr. and Mrs. Alston, of South Carolina, and Mr. Elliott, the Commissioner of that State at the Paris Exhibition, passed last Sunday evening with us. She is a superior woman, and withal quite good looking and agreeable.

I received the enclosed letter from Mary to you on Monday last, by the Baltic. Knowing from unmistakable signs that it came from Mary, I opened it merely to ascertain that she was well. I purposely know but little of its contents. I wrote to her yesterday, and invited her to pay us a visit next spring, offering to pay the expenses of her journey. I suggested that it would scarcely be worth her while to pay us a visit for less than a year, and that in the mean time, Mr. Baker's expenses would be much reduced, and he would have an opportunity of arranging his affairs.

Doctor and Mrs. Le Vert, formerly Miss Octavia Walton, are now here. Strangely enough, I had never met her before. She is sprightly, talkative and animated, but does not seem to understand the art of growing old gracefully. I shall make a favorable impression on her, I trust, by being a good listener. I have not seen her daughter, but they are all to be with me some evening before their departure, which will be in the Arago on the 24th instant.

I have not received my letter of recall, and entertain but little hope that it will be sent before General Thomas shall reach Washington. I will keep you advised. I dine to-day with General D'Oxholme.

The repulse of the Russians at Kars astonishes me. The Turks and the French have acquired the glory of the present war. Our mother England is rather upon the background.

Sir William and Lady Ouseley are most deeply affected by the loss of their son. I saw her last night for the first time since the sad event, and most sincerely sympathized with her. She became calmer after the first burst of grief was over, and talked much about you. On request of Sir William I write to-day to Mrs. Roosevelt, giving her the sad information.

Lady Stafford requests me by letter to give you her warmest regards, and to tell you she hopes Heaven will bless you both in time and eternity.

Mrs. Shapter looks delicate. I saw her yesterday. She said she would write, but I have not yet received her letter. Should it come, I shall send it by the despatch bag.

October 26, 1855.

I have but little time to write before the closing of the mail, having been much and unexpectedly engaged to-day.

Almost every person I meet speaks kindly of you. I dined with Lady Talbot de Malahide on Tuesday last, and she desired me specially to send you her kindest love. Doctor, Madame and Miss Le Vert passed last Sunday evening with me. She is a most agreeable person. I think it right to say this of her, after what I wrote you in my last letter.

I dine to-day with Lady Chantrey, where I am to meet Dr. Twiss.

Grey left yesterday morning on a visit to her relatives in Devonshire. I made her a present of a sovereign to pay her expenses there, besides paying

her week's wages. I have enlisted Lady Chantrey warmly in her favor, and I hope she may procure a place.

I received by the last steamer a private letter from Governor Marcy, in answer to mine requesting my letter of recall. He informs me it had been sent and was then on its way. There is something mysterious in the matter which I cannot explain. It has not yet arrived, though it ought to have been here before your departure. Before that, I had received despatches Nos. 109 and 111. Despatch No. 110—the intermediate one—has not yet come to hand. I presume my letter of recall was in the missing despatch. I have my own suspicions, but these do not attach to Governor Marcy. His letter was frank and friendly, and was evidently written in the full conviction that I would have received my recall before his letter could reach me. Some people are very anxious to delay my return home.

Now the aspect of things has changed. The British government has recently sent a considerable fleet to our coasts, and most inflammatory and absurd articles in reference to the object of this fleet have appeared in the *Times*, the *Globe*, and the *Morning Post*. I have no doubt they will be republished all over the United States. The aspect of affairs between the two countries has now become squally; and Mr. Appleton will not consent to remain here as chargé till the new minister arrives. In this he is right; and consistently with my honor and character, I could not desert my post under such circumstances. I may, therefore, be compelled to remain here until the end of December, or even longer. This will depend on the time of the appointment of my successor, which may not be until the meeting of Congress. It is possible that Mr. Appleton may return home by the Pacific on the 3d November. He is very anxious I should consent to it, which, however, I have not yet done.

I trust I may hear of your arrival at home by the Pacific on to-morrow. The foggy and rainy weather has commenced, and the climate is now dreary. Mr. and Mrs. John Wurts, of New York, passed the evening with me yesterday. He is an old friend and she an agreeable lady. They will return by the Pacific.

November 9th, 1855.

I have received your favors of the 21st and 22d October. I thank Heaven that you have arrived at home in health and safety. The weather since your departure has been such as you know prevails at this season, and London has been even too dull for me, and this is saying much for it.

I received my letter of recall, dated on the 11th September, last Monday, the 5th instant, with an explanation from Governor Marcy of the mistake which had occasioned its delay. Had this been sent on the 11th September, I might with all convenience have accompanied you home, either on the 6th or, at latest, on the 20th October.

The storm which has been raised in England in regard to the relations between the two countries renders it impossible that I should leave the lega-

tion at the present moment. Mr. Appleton has at length reluctantly consented to remain until my departure, and this relieves me from much embarrassment. I now hope to be at home early in January, but this for the present you had better keep to yourself. I may in the meantime probably visit Paris.

I regret that such unfounded reports respecting Mr. Mason's health should reach the United States.

You speak to me concerning the Presidency. You of all other persons best know that even if there were no other cogent reasons, the state of my health is not such as would enable me to undergo the intense anxiety and fatigue incident to wearing that crown of thorns. Of course I wish nothing said about the state of my health.

My friends in Pennsylvania constitute the ablest and most honest portion of the Democratic party. They now have the power in their own hands, and they ought, *for their own benefit, not mine*, to take care that Pennsylvania shall be represented by proper persons in the national convention. They can, if they will, exert such a powerful influence as to select the best man for the country from among the list of candidates, and *thus take care of themselves*. This would be my advice to them, were I at home. I hope they may follow it. As far as I can learn, President Pierce is daily growing stronger for a renomination.

I enclose you a note which I have received from the Duchess of Somerset.

I know not whether Mrs. Shapter will write to you to-day. I communicated your kind messages, with which she appeared to be much gratified, and spoke of you most affectionately.

You will be gratified to learn that Sir —— does not bear malice. Mr. Bedinger in writing to me from Copenhagen on the 4th instant, says: "I saw them both several times. Sir —— and his charming niece (for so I found her), told me much of yourself and your charming niece, who they said had recently left you for America."

I have a very long despatch for to-day, and must bid you adieu. May God be with you to protect and direct you. Be prudent and circumspect and cautious in your communications to others. There are very few people in the world who can keep a secret. They must tell or burst.

November 16th, 1855.

I have received your favor of the 30th ultimo, per the Atlantic.

General Webb's advice is likely to be followed, very much against my own will. I am now in the midst of the storm, and my sense of duty leaves me no alternative but to remain at my post until the danger shall have passed away, or until President Pierce shall think proper to appoint my successor. Mr. Appleton goes home by this steamer. The President had sent him a commission as chargé ad interim, to continue from my departure until the arrival of my successor. I resisted his importunities to go home as long as I could, but the last letter from his wife was of such a character that I could no longer resist. He is a *perfect* secretary, as well as an excellent friend. He

has been in the house with me since your departure, and I shall not now give the house up for the present. The little cook has done very well.

I presume that ere this you know that Colonel Forney has come out openly in favor of the renomination of General Pierce. You know that I considered this almost unavoidable. General Pierce placed him in the *Union*, and has maintained him there and afforded him the means of making a fortune. Besides, he is the editor of the President's official journal. Under these circumstances, he could not well have acted otherwise, and I do not blame him for it. Still he will be severely attacked, and in self-defence will be obliged to come out and say that he has acted thus because I had determined not to become a candidate for nomination before the national convention; and this defence will be nothing more than the truth. This will possibly place Mr. Dallas and General Pierce as rival candidates before the Democracy of Pennsylvania, which might prove unfortunate. *But still be quiet and discreet and say nothing.*

If I had any views to the Presidency, which I have not, I would advise you not to remain longer in Philadelphia than you can well avoid. A large portion of my friends in that city are bitterly hostile to those whom you must necessarily meet there. I presume, without knowing, that Governor Bigler will be the candidate of the administration for the Senate.

Lady Ouseley desires me to send you her kindest love, and I believe she entertains for you a warm affection. I have not seen her to deliver your message since the receipt of your letter. Lady Alice Peel, Lady Chantry and others send their kind regards. I dine with Mrs. Shapter to-morrow.

I shall write by the present steamer to James Henry to come out here immediately, as I may be detained until January or February, and I shall want some person to be in the house with me. Could I have foreseen what has come to pass, I might have been selfish enough to retain you here. I can scarcely see the paper for a "yellow fog." I wish you could call to see John G. Brenner and his wife.

Give my love to brother Edward and his family.

November 23d, 1855.

I have received your favors of the 5th and 6th instants, and immediately posted your letters to the duchess, Lady Ouseley and Miss Hargreaves.

The weather here has been even more disagreeable than usual for the season, and I have had a cough and clearing of the throat exactly similar to your own last winter. I have not used any remedies for it, and it is now, thank Heaven, passing away. Since Mr. Appleton left, I have got Mr. Moran to sleep in the house with me.

Lady Ouseley has been quite unwell, but she was able to ride out in my carriage yesterday. . . . . She says, "when you write to Miss Lane, pray give her my best love, with many thanks for her kind note, which I will answer as soon as I am better."

In a letter from Mrs. Roosevelt, dated on the 13th ultimo, in which, after

mentioning that she had learned your intention to return home, she invites you to make her house your home while in New York, etc., etc. I have written to her to-day, thanking her for her kind invitation, and expressing the desire that you should know each other better.

I agree with you in opinion that Mr. ——— is not the man to succeed in public life, or in captivating such fastidious ladies as yourself; but yet I have no doubt he is a good and amiable man, as he is certainly well informed. Much allowance ought to be made for wounded vanity. But I admit I am no judge in these matters, since you inform me that Mr. ——— has been the admiration of Philadelphia ladies.

Mr. Van Dyke does not properly appreciate Mr. Tyler. I like them both very much, as well as their wives.

Van Dyke is able, grateful, energetic and influential, and should he take care of himself, will yet win his way to a high position.

Do not forget to present my love to Lily Macalester and my kind regards to her father and Mrs. Lathrop.

I know of no news here which would interest you much. A few dinner parties are now given, to which I have been invited. I dine to-day with Monckton Milnes, and on Tuesday next with Sir Henry and Lady Holland.

Many kind inquiries are still made about you. I wish you would inform Eskridge without delay that I attach great importance to the immediate transfer of the Michigan Central Railroad stock about which I wrote to him by the last steamer. I hope, however, that ere this can reach you he will have attended to this business.

In one respect, at least, I am now deemed a man of great importance. In the present uneasy condition of the stock exchange, an incautious word from me would either raise or sink the price of consols.

I see much of Mr. Ward, and he is *thoroughly American* in our present difficulties. This has raised him much in my estimation.

LONDON, November 2, 1855.

I have but truly a moment to write to you. We did not learn your arrival by the Pacific, which I had expected with much interest.

Lord Clarendon told me yesterday that the queen had expressed her regret not to have seen you before your departure. He said she had heard you were to marry Sir ———, and expressed how much she would have been gratified had you been detained in England. We had some talk about the disparity of your ages, which I have not time to repeat, even if it were worth repeating. I said it was supposed Sir ——— was very rich. "Yes," he said, "enormously."

There is a great muss here at present about the relations between the two countries, but I think it will all eventually blow over and may do good. Everybody is now anxious to know something about American affairs; and both in the press and the public we have many powerful defenders against the measures adopted by Lord Palmerston's government.

November 30, 1855.

I have received your favor of the 12th instant from Lancaster. Ere this can reach you Mr. Appleton will have seen you and told you all about my affairs. I have but little to say to you of any consequence.

I saw the duchess two or three days ago, and she spoke in raptures, as is her wont, about your "beautiful letter" and yourself. She begged me to say to you she would soon answer it.

I shall deliver your message to Mrs. Sturgis as soon as she shall appear in public after her confinement. . . . . Among the ancient Jews she would have been considered a prodigy and a blessing. I like her very much.

Van Dyke's message is like himself. He is a kind and true-hearted fellow. I am persuaded, however, he does Tyler injustice. His being for Wise was but another reason for being for myself. He had written me several letters of a desponding character. He thought the State was going all wrong,—great danger of Dallas, etc., and attributed all to my refusal to be a candidate, and not returning home at the time I had appointed.

By the last steamer, however, I received a letter from him of a character altogether different. . . . .

I shall be anxious to learn what plans you have adopted for the winter.

The enclosed letter from Lady Chantrey was handed to me by Charles. In a hurry I opened it. "Why," said he, "that is to Miss Lane, and was brought here from Lady Chantrey." I now take the cover off, and enclose it to you, assuring you that I have not read a single word of it.

December 14, 1855.

I have nothing of interest to communicate by this steamer. The past week has been dull, gloomy, and cold for the season. The walks in the park are covered with snow, and I find them very slippery. The winter has set in with unusual severity, whilst the price of provisions is very high. God help the poor in this vast Babel! Their sufferings will be dreadful.

Although I have not suffered, either from ennui or despondency, yet I shall hail the arrival of James Henry with pleasure. I think it may be of service to him to be with me a month or six weeks.

I am extremely sorry to learn that "Mrs. Plitt's health is very bad." She is a woman among a thousand. Most sincerely and deeply do I sympathize with her. Give her my kindest love.

I have heard nothing of the six shawls since your departure, but I have already written to Mr. Randall, and requested him to send me the bill, which I shall pay as soon as received. . . . .

I have received your furs from Mrs. Shapter, and shall send them to New York by the "Arago," which will leave Southampton on the 19th instant. They are packed in a nice little box directed to the care of George Plitt, Esquire. I shall, through Mr. Croshey, get Captain Lines himself to take charge of them and pay the duty. Please to so arrange it that some friend at



New York may be ready to receive them and refund him the duty which he may have paid.

I have again inadvertently opened a letter addressed to you which I enclose, and I assure that I did not read a single word in it, except "My dearest Hattie." I can, therefore, only guess who is the writer.

I started out yesterday and paid three very agreeable visits to the Countess Bernsdorff, Lady Palmerston, and the Duchess of Somerset. I found them all at home, and had a nice little chat with each. The duchess told me Lord Panmure had been with her, and had been quite extravagant in his praises of what he termed my able, friendly, and discreet conduct in the late difficulties between the two countries. But for me, he said, these might have produced serious consequences. The duchess, as usual, spoke extravagantly in your praise, and desired her love to you.

I presume that Mrs. Lane and yourself have had a fine time of it hearing Rachel. She is quite competent to understand and appreciate the beauties of French tragedy. However this may be, she possesses as much knowledge in this line as thousands of others who will be quite enraptured with Rachel's acting. I am glad you are on good and friendly terms with her. . . . From present appearances the war will end before the spring. This will be the case should the czar accept the terms suggested by Austria and consented to by the allies.

December 21, 1855.

Since the date of my last letter I have received the news of the death of poor Mary.\* I need not inform you of my devoted attachment to her, and she deserved it all. Poor girl! she had her own troubles, and she bore them all with cheerful patience. She is now at rest, I trust, in that heavenly home where there is no more pain and sorrow. Her loss will make the remainder of my residence here, which I trust may be brief, dreary and disconsolate.

How happy I am to know that you are with Mrs. Plitt! She has a warm heart, and a fine intellect, and will, better than any other person, know how to comfort and soothe you in your sorrow. I am thankful that you are now at home.

With Mrs. Plitt's kind letter to me came that from Mrs. Speer to you, and one from Lieutenant Beale to myself. I shall always gratefully remember his kindness and that of his wife. His letter was just what it ought to have been. I wrote to Mrs. Plitt from Southampton by the "Arago," which left on Wednesday last.

The death of poor Mary has been your first serious sorrow, because you were too young to feel deeply the loss of your parents. Ere this can reach you a sufficient time will have elapsed for the first natural overflowings of sorrow. I would not have restrained them if I could. It is now time that they should moderate, and that you should not mourn the dead at the expense of your duties to the living. This sad event ought to teach you the vanity of all things human and transitory, and cause you to fix your thoughts, desires, and

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\* Mrs. Baker.

affections on that Being with whom "there is no variableness or shadow of turning." This will not render you gloomy, but will enable you the better to perform all the duties of life. In all calamitous events we ought to say emphatically: "Thy will be done." At the last, all the proceedings of a mysterious Providence will be justified in another and a better world, and it is our duty here to submit with humble resignation. Although my course of life has been marked by temporal prosperity, thanks be to Heaven, yet I have experienced heart-rending afflictions, and you must not expect to be exempt from the common lot of humanity. I have not seen Mrs. Shapter, but I sent her Mr. Beale's letter, which she returned with a most feeling note. She, also, wrote to you by the "Arago."

You will know sooner in the United States than I can at what time I shall be relieved. I shall now expect to hear by the arrival of every steamer that my successor has been appointed. Should he arrive here within a month or six weeks, I still have an idea of running over to the continent; but I have yet determined upon nothing. I have a great desire to be at home.

December 28, 1855.

I have received your favor of the 11th instant with the copy of Mr. Baker's letter, which I have read with deep interest. I wrote to you last week on the subject of poor Mary's death, which I deeply deplore. I hope that ere this can reach you your mind will have been tranquillized on that sad event. It would have been wrong, it would have been unnatural, had you not experienced anguish for the loss of so good, kind-hearted, and excellent a sister.

Still, the loss is irreparable, grief is unavailing, and you have duties to perform towards yourself as well as your friends. To mourn for the dead at the expense of these duties would be sinful. We shall never forget poor Mary, her memory will always be dear to us; but it is our duty to bow with submission to the will of that Being in whose hands are the issues of life and death. You know what a low estimate I have ever placed upon a woman without religious principles. I know that in your conduct you are guided by these principles, more than is common in the fashionable world; but yet if this melancholy dispensation of Providence should cause you to pay more attention than you have done to "the things which pertain to your everlasting peace," this would be a happy result. I have lost many much-loved relatives and friends; but though age becomes comparatively callous, I have felt and feel deeply the loss of Mary and Jessie. Poor Jessie! She died breathing my name with her devotions. What can I do—what shall I do for her children?

I send by the bag to the department a letter from the duchess, to whom, I believe, I have not mentioned our loss.

Sir William and Lady Ouseley dined with me a few days ago. There were no persons present except ourselves. She sincerely sympathizes with you. Time begins to produce its healing influence on her grief, though both she and poor Sir William have been sadly cast down by their calamity.

James Henry arrived here on Christmas evening after a passage of three

weeks which he evidently enjoyed. He talks to Mr. Ward knowingly about every part of a sailing vessel. His plan of travel is quite extensive, far too much so for the sum he intends to expend. I shall gradually cut it down to more reasonable limits.

No news yet of the appointment of my successor, notwithstanding the efforts of Mr. Appleton. I have not received the President's message, but expect it on Monday with much anxiety. Should I then hear nothing of a successor or secretary of legation, I shall give them formal notice that I will present my letter of recall on a particular day; and should no person arrive in the meantime, that I will leave the legation in charge of General Campbell.

January 4, 1856.

I have received yours of the 17th ultimo, and am pained to learn that you neither see your friends nor take exercise since your return to Philadelphia. Your grief for poor Mary's death, or at least the manifestation of it, exceeds all reasonable limits, and I am truly sorry that you have not more self-command. Although I know it is sincere, and it ought to be deep, yet you ought to recollect that the world are severe censors.

In regard to the bringing of dear Mary's remains from San Francisco to Lancaster or Franklin county, I have not a word to say. This must be left to her nearer relatives. She sleeps as sweetly on the distant shores of the Pacific as she could do on any other spot of earth, and her disembodied spirit will be equally near to you wherever you may wander. Still I know it is a sort of instinct of nature to desire to have the tombs of our friends near us; and even if I had any right to object, I should not exercise it. Do as you please, and I shall be content. . . . .

James Henry is with me very busy and persevering in sight-seeing. I am sorry I do not feel it proper to detain him with me. The carnival comes so early this year that he must soon be off, as he intends to take Naples en route to Rome. I get along very well with Mr. Moran, though the labor is too great for one man to perform. In truth I cannot answer all the letters I receive, and attend to my appropriate duties. I shall, however, endeavor to write you a few lines every week. Friends still inquire after you with great kindness.

January 11, 1856.

I have received your favor of the 25th ultimo, together with an agreeable little note from Mrs. Plitt, for which give her my thanks.

James Henry left us yesterday afternoon. He had drawn all his plans with mathematical precision, and I did not like to mar them. He was to go direct to Naples, and be at Rome during the carnival, so that he had but little time. He is a calculating, and I think a determined boy. . . . . He has certainly made a favorable impression here on the persons with whom he has been in company, especially on Lady Holland. The dinner went off extremely well;

some of them said *almost* as well as if you had been present. As you would probably like to know the company, I will tell you :

Mr. and Madame Tricoupi, the Count and Countess de Lavradio, Count Bernstorff, the Brazilian Minister and Madame Moreiro, the Swedish Minister and Baroness Hochschild, the Danish Minister and Madame D'Oxholme, Mr. and Mrs. Comyn, Sir Henry and Lady Holland, Lady Talbot de Malahide, R. Monckton Milnes, and J. Buchanan Henry, Esq.

Count Colloredo had the commands of the queen, and could not attend. Countess Bernstorff was ill. Baron Bentinck had an engagement in the country, and so had Mr. and Mrs. Musurus. So you have the list of invitations as well as of those who attended. I expect to leave the house next week.

I very often think of poor Mary, and shall always cherish her memory with deep affection. I trust that ere this your grief has moderated, and that you begin to bear your loss with the philosophy of a Christian, and with humble resignation to the Divine will.

James desired me to send his love to you, and say that he would write to you from Rome.

January 25, 1856.

Without a secretary of legation, I have so much business to transact and so many persons to see, that I must give great offence by necessarily failing to answer the letters of my friends on your side of the Atlantic. I have not yet heard of the appointment of my successor from Washington; but the last steamer brought out a report, on which some of the passengers thought reliance might be placed, that Governor Toucey either had been or would be appointed. It would be difficult to make a better selection. In all this matter, they have treated me discourteously and improperly. By every steamer since the return of Mr. Appleton to the United States, I had a right to expect news of a new appointment. I have written more than once *emphatically* upon the subject, and they are now fully apprised that I shall leave the legation next month, and entrust its affairs to General Campbell, should neither minister nor secretary in the mean time appear.

The Central American questions might now, I think, be easily settled with any other premier than Lord Palmerston. Since the publication of the correspondence here and the articles in the *Times* and *Daily News* in our favor, there would seem to be a general public opinion that we are right. This, I think, renders it certain that serious difficulties between the two countries cannot grow out of these questions. I enclose you an article from the *Morning Advertiser*, but little calculated to do me good in the United States. What on earth could have induced the editor to write such an article is a mystery. So far as regards any effect it may produce upon the Presidency, I feel quite indifferent. There is a profound wisdom in a remark of Rochefoucauld, with which I met the other day : "Les choses que nous desirons n'arrivent pas, ou, si elles arrivent, ce n'est, ni dans le tems, ni de la manière que nous aurait

fait le plus de plaisir." I had a letter yesterday from Judge Mason, dated on the 23d, giving me a pressing and cordial invitation to stay with him when I visit Paris. This, I believe, I shall accept, at least for part of my brief visit. He is much pleased with Mr. Wise, his new secretary of legation. James B. Henry, he says, who took the despatches to him, "remained but a few hours in Paris, hurrying to Marseilles to take a steamer for Italy." I have not heard from him since he left, nor did I expect to hear so soon.

Mrs. Shapter has been quite unwell, but is now down-stairs again. I have not seen her since the date of my last.

We had quite an agreeable dinner party at Lord Woodehouse's on Wednesday last. I had a very pleasant conversation with the Countess Persigny, who speaks English very prettily, though not yet fluently. She is evidently proud of being the grand daughter of Marshal Ney, and well she may be. We had quite a *tête à tête*. She, or rather the count, has been very civil to me of late. The woman-killer, for whom, as you know, I have very little respect, and with whom I have had no intercourse for a considerable period, seems determined that I shall be on good terms with him. I suffered as usual the penalty of this dinner—a sleepless and uncomfortable night. Dinner invitations are again becoming numerous, but I shall accept none except from those to whom I feel under obligations for past kindness. Your name still continues to be mentioned with kindness by your friends and acquaintances. I sent the other day by the "Frigate Bird," to Charles Brown, the collector, a portrait of the justly celebrated John Hampden, from our friend MacGregor,\* intended to be presented to Congress, and have requested Mr. Brown to keep it for me till my return. I also sent two boxes containing books and different articles—one of them champagne and the other wine. These might be sent to Eskridge. Please to tell Mr. Plitt about them, who, if he will call on Mr. Brown, will hear all about the picture. I have neither room nor time to write more.

February 1st, 1856.

I have but little time to write to-day.

Parliament was yesterday opened by the queen. I need not describe the ceremony to you, as you have already witnessed it. What struck me most forcibly was the appearance in the diplomatic box of a full-blooded black negro as the representative of his Imperial Majesty of Hayti.

I have received a letter from James Henry, dated at Rome on the 20th ultimo. . . . . Realities never correspond with the expectations of youth.

I had confidently expected to receive by the Atlantic, whose mails and despatch bag have just come to hand, an answer to my last most urgent request for the appointment of my successor and the immediate appointment of a secretary of legation, but in this I have been disappointed. Not one word in relation to the subject. . . . .

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\* James MacGregor, Esq., M. P.

I wish I had time to write you more. This steamer will carry a most important despatch to Washington.

February 8th, 1856.

Our latest dates from New York are to Saturday, the 19th of January. We have had no Collins or Cunard steamer during the present week. Since the first spell of cold weather, the winter has been open, damp and disagreeable.

I have gone a good deal into society since the meeting of Parliament, because it is my duty to embrace every opportunity of conversing with influential people here on the relations between the two countries. *The Morning Advertiser* has been publishing a series of articles, one stating that high words had passed between Lord Clarendon and myself, at the foreign office, and that he had used violent expressions to me there; another that I had, because of this, declined to attend Lady Palmerston's first reception; and a third, which I have not seen, that Sir Henry Bulwer and myself had been in conference together with a view of settling the Central American questions. Now all this is mere moonshine, and there is not a shadow of truth in any one of these statements.

I went to Count Persigny's on the evening of Shrove Tuesday, and had quite an agreeable time of it. There were a number of distinguished persons present, though not a crowd. Many kind inquiries were made respecting yourself. I dine to-day at Sir Henry Holland's, on purpose to meet Macaulay, should his health enable him to be present. On Tuesday at Mr. Butt's, and on Wednesday at Lord Granville's, where there will be a party in the evening.

I met the "woman-killer" — in the ante-chamber of the foreign office on Wednesday last. He now seems determined to be such good friends with me, that in good manners I must treat him kindly. Knowing my tender point, he launched out in your praises, and said such extravagant things of you as I could scarcely stand, notwithstanding my weakness on this subject. Fortunately for me, before he had concluded, he was summoned to Lord Clarendon, greatly to my relief.

I think they will hesitate about sending me away, even if Mr. Crampton should receive his passports. Mr. Cobden told me the other evening at the Reform Club that Mr. Willcox, the member of Parliament from Southampton, had said to Lord Palmerston: "Well, you are about to send Buchanan away;" and his reply was, "If Buchanan should remain until I send him away, he will be here to all eternity." This, however, is *à la mode de* Palmerston, and means but little one way or the other. I only repeat it as one of his jokes; and my hesitation on the subject is not in the slightest degree founded on this remark.

I should infer that my Presidential stock is declining in the market. I do not now receive so many love letters on the subject as formerly, always excepting the ever faithful Van Dyke and a few others. Heaven bless them! I see the best face has been put on Bigler's election, but still it is an ugly

symptom. Declining prospects give me no pain. These would rather afford me pleasure, were it not for my friends. Pierce's star appears now to be in the ascendant, though I think it is not very probable he will be nominated. Heaven only knows who will be the man.

February 15, 1856.

Nothing of importance has occurred since I wrote you last. I have been out a good deal, deeming it my duty at the present crisis to mingle with influential society as much as possible. Everywhere you are kindly remembered. Lord and Lady Stanhope have been very particular in their inquiries about you, and say much which it would be gratifying to you to hear. I promised to Mr. and Mrs. Butt, that I would transmit you their kind compliments. The Duchess of Somerset begged me to say to you, that at the date of her letter to you, she had not heard of your affliction.

I trust that Mr. Dallas may soon make his appearance in London, as I am exceedingly anxious to be relieved from my present position. . . . . What will you say to my reconciliation with Governor Bigler? He addressed me *such a letter* as you have scarcely ever read. It was impossible for me to avoid giving it a kind answer. I accepted his overtures, and informed him that it would not be my fault if we should not always hereafter remain friends. He had often made advances to me indirectly before, which I always declined. This seems to be the era of good feeling in Pennsylvania. Davy Lynch's letters, for some months past, have been quite graphic and amusing. He says that "the Eleventh hour Buchanan Legion" at Harrisburgh have unanimously elected him a member, for which he kindly thanked them, and at the same time advised them to work hard and diligently to make up for lost time. They responded that their exertions should be directed with a view to throw my old foggy friends into the shade.

Notwithstanding all this, the signs of the times are not very auspicious to my experienced eye, and I shall be neither disappointed nor sorry should the Cincinnati convention select some other person. It will, however, be always a source to me of heartfelt gratification, that the Democracy of my native State have not deserted me in my old age, but have been true to the last.

I am truly sorry to hear of Mr. Randall's affliction. He is an able and true hearted man, to whom I am much attached. Please to remember me to him and Mrs. Randall in the kindest terms.

Your uncle John has died at a good old age, with a character for integrity which he well deserved. He had a kind and excellent heart. As he advanced in life, his peculiarities increased, and apparently obscured his merits, in his intercourse with his relations and friends. But still he possessed them. For many years after he came to Lancaster we were intimate friends, and we always continued friends.

I trust that Mr. Dallas may arrive by the next Collins steamer. It is my intention to act handsomely towards him. I thank Heaven that a successor has at last been appointed. Whether I shall return home soon after his arrival

or go to the continent I cannot at present determine. On the 18th December last I paid Mr. Randall for the six shawls, and have his bill and receipt.

. At Lord Granville's dinner on Wednesday, the Marquis of Lansdowne and Mr. Ellice said very pretty things about you. Colonel Seibels, our minister at Brussels, is now here with me, and I am delighted to see him. He will remain until after the queen's levee on the 20th. I shall leave the house on Tuesday next, on which day the inventory is to be taken, and shall most probably go to the Clarendon.

February 22, 1856.

Another week has passed, and I am happy to inform you that you are still freshly remembered by your friends and acquaintances on this side of the Atlantic. I delivered up possession of the house to the agent of Mrs. Lewis on Tuesday morning last, with the exception of the offices, and went to Fenton's, because I could not obtain comfortable apartments at the Clarendon. I retain the offices for the present at the rate of £10 per month, awaiting the arrival of Mr. Dallas. I earnestly hope he may be here in the Pacific, which is expected at Liverpool on Wednesday or Thursday next. The two house agents, on the part of Mrs. Lewis and myself respectively, have been employed on the inventory ever since Tuesday morning, and have not yet finished.

I expect to be all ready, upon the arrival of Mr. Dallas, either to go home or go to the continent, according to the then existing circumstances. At present I am quite undetermined which course I shall pursue.

You will see by the *Morning Post* that I presented Col. Seibels at the levee on Wednesday. He paid me a visit for a week, and his society afforded me great pleasure. He is both an honorable and agreeable man, as well as a tried and sincere friend. I dine with Lord and Lady Palmerston to-morrow, and with the Lord and Lady Mayoress on Wednesday, and on Thursday attend the wedding of Miss Sturgis and Mr. Coleman at 11 o'clock at the Church of "St. John, Robin Hood," close to the Robin Hood Gate of Richmond Park. Mr. Sturgis's country residence is close to this church.

I receive letters from home, some of which say, with reference to the Presidency, "Come home immediately," and others, "Stay away a while longer." I shall not regulate my conduct with any view to this office. If it be the will of Providence to bestow upon me the Presidency, I shall accept it as a duty, a burden and a trial, and not otherwise. I shall take no steps to obtain it.

Mrs. Shapter's health is delicate, and John has been quite unwell. I shall not fail to leave her some token of my great regard before I leave London. She richly deserves it.

February 29th, 1856.

. . . . . I dined with the queen on Wednesday last, and had a pleasant time of it. I took the Duchess of Argyll in to dinner, and sat between her and the princess royal. With the latter I had much pleasant conversation. She spoke a great deal of you and made many inquiries about you, saying



how very much pleased she had been with you. The queen also spoke of you kindly and inquired in a cordial manner about you. Indeed, it would seem you were a favorite of both. There has been a marked and favorable change of feeling here within the last month towards the United States. I am now made something of a lion wherever I go, and I go much into society as a matter of duty. The sentiment and proceeding at the Mansion House on Wednesday last were quite remarkable. Perhaps it is just as well I received the command to dine with the queen on that day.

I am yet in ignorance as to the time when Mr. Dallas may be expected to arrive. The moment I learn he has arrived in Liverpool, I shall apply for my audience of leave and joyfully surrender the legation to him with the least possible delay.

March 7th, 1856.

I received your two letters of February 15th and 19th on Monday last, on my return from Mr. Lampson's, where I went on Saturday evening. Both Mr. and Mrs. Lampson talked much and kindly of you, and desired to be remembered to you. . . . . I shall expect Mr. Dallas about the middle of next week, and intend soon after his arrival to cross over to Paris. I hope to be at home some time in April, but when, I cannot now inform you.

I am glad to learn that you purpose to go to New York. It was very kind in you to jog my memory about what I should bring you from Paris. I know not what may be the result. *Nous verrons.*

Becky Smith is a damsel in distress, intelligent and agreeable, and a country-woman in a strange land. Her conduct in London has been unexceptionable and she is making her way in the world. She has my sympathy, and I have given her "a lift" whenever I could with propriety.

I delivered your letter to the Duchess of Somerset on Monday last, and she was delighted with it. She handed it to me to read. It was well and feelingly written. I was sorry to perceive that you complained of your health, but you will, I trust, come out with the birds in the spring, restored and renovated. I am pleased with what you say concerning Senator Welsh. In writing to me, I think you had better direct to me at Paris, to the care of Mr. Mason, giving him his appropriate style, and you need not pay the postage; better not, indeed. But you will scarcely have time to write a single letter there before I shall have probably left. I shall continue to write to you, but you need not continue to write to me more than once after the receipt of this, unless I should advise you differently by the next steamer.

Mr. Bates is quite unwell, and I fear he is breaking up very fast. At the wedding of Miss Sturgis the other day, as I approached to take my seat beside Madame Van de Weyer, she said: "Unwilling as you may be, you are now compelled to sit beside me." Of course I replied that this was no compulsion, but a great privilege. Mrs. Bates complained much that Mrs. Lawrence has not written to her.

March 14, 1856.

I tell you the simple truth when I say I have no time to-day to write to you at length. Mr. Dallas arrived at Liverpool yesterday afternoon, and is to leave there to-morrow at nine for London; so the consul telegraphed to me. I have heard nothing from him since his appointment. I expect an audience of leave from the queen early next week, and shall then, God willing, pass over to the continent.

I have this morning received your two letters of the 25th and 29th, and congratulate you on your arrival in New York. I hope you may have an agreeable time of it. Your letter of the 25th is excellent. I like its tone and manner very much and am sorry I have not time to write you at length in reply. I am also pleased with that of the 29th. I send by the bag the daguerreotype of our excellent friend, Mrs. Shapter. I have had mine taken for her. I think hers is very good. I saw her yesterday in greatly improved health and in fine spirits.

March 18, 1856.

The queen at my audience of leave on Saturday, desired to be kindly remembered to you.

The Márquis of Lansdowne at parting from me said: "If Miss Lane should have the kindness to remember me, do me the honor to lay me at her feet."

Old Robert Owen came in and has kept me so long that I must cut this letter short. I go to Paris, God willing, on Thursday next, in company with Messrs. Campbell and Croshey our consuls. I send a letter from James which I have received open.

BRUSSELS, March 27, 1856.

I write this in the legation of Colonel Siebels. He and I intend to go to-morrow to the Hague on a visit to Mr. Belmont, from which I propose to return to Paris on Tuesday or Wednesday next. It is my purpose, God willing, to leave for Havre for home in the Arago on Wednesday, the 9th of April. I do not believe that a more comfortable vessel, or a better or safer captain exists. All who have crossed the Atlantic with him speak in the same terms both of his ship and himself.

I shall return to Mr. Mason's at Paris, because I could not do otherwise without giving offence. What a charming family it is. Judge Mason, though somewhat disabled, has a much more healthy appearance, and in the face resembles much more his former self, than he did when attending the Ostend conference. The redness and sometimes blueness of his face have disappeared, and he now looks as he did in former years.

I shall defer all accounts of my doings on the continent until after we meet. I may or I may not write to you once more before embarking.

You might let Eskridge and Miss Hetty know at what time I shall probably be at home, though I do not wish it to be noised abroad. You cannot calculate our passage to be less than two weeks. Should I reach my native shore on my birth-day, the 23d April, I shall thank God and be content. The Arago takes the southern route to keep clear of the ice.

## CHAPTER VIII.

1856.

RETURN TO AMERICA—NOMINATION AND ELECTION TO THE PRESIDENCY  
—SIGNIFICANCE OF MR. BUCHANAN'S ELECTION IN RESPECT TO THE  
SECTIONAL QUESTIONS—PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE.

MR. BUCHANAN arrived at New York in the latter part of April, 1856, and there met with a public reception from the authorities and people of the city, which evinced the interest that now began to be everywhere manifested in him as the probable future President. With what feelings he himself regarded the prospect of his nomination by his party, and his election, has appeared from his unreserved communications with his friends. That he did not make efforts to secure the nomination will presently appear upon other testimony than his own. He reached Wheatland in the last week of April, and there he remained a very quiet observer of what was taking place in the political world. Before he left England, he had been informed that a Democratic convention of his own State had unanimously declared him to be the first choice of the Pennsylvania Democrats for the Presidency. To this he had made no formal or public response; but on the 8th of June he was waited upon by a committee from this convention, and he then addressed them as follows:

GENTLEMEN :—

I thank you, with all my heart, for the kind terms in which, under a resolution of the late Democratic State Convention, you have informed me that I am "their unanimous choice for the next Presidency."

When the proceedings of your convention reached me in a foreign land, they excited emotions of gratitude which I might in vain attempt to express. This was not because the Democracy of my much-loved State had by their own spontaneous movement placed me in nomination for the Presidency, an honor which I had not sought, but because this nomination constitutes of

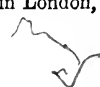
itself the highest evidence that, after a long course of public services, my public conduct has been approved by those to whom I am indebted, under Providence, for all the offices and honors I have ever enjoyed. In success and in defeat, in the sunshine and in the storm, they have ever been the same kind friends to me, and I value their continued confidence and good opinion far above the highest official honors of my country.

The duties of the President, whomsoever he may be, have been clearly and ably indicated by the admirable resolutions of the convention which you have just presented to me, and all of which, without reference to those merely personal to myself, I heartily adopt. Indeed, they met my cordial approbation from the moment when I first perused them on the other side of the Atlantic. They constitute a platform broad, national, and conservative, and one eminently worthy of the Democracy of our great and good old State.

These resolutions, carried into execution with inflexibility and perseverance, precluding all hope of changes, and yet in a kindly spirit, will ere long allay the dangerous excitement which has for some years prevailed on the subject of domestic slavery, and again unite all portions of our common country in the ancient bonds of brotherly affection, under the flag of the Constitution and the Union.

The Democratic National Convention assembled at Cincinnati soon afterwards, and from a gentleman who was present, although not a member of the body—my friend, Mr. S. M. Barlow of New York—I have received an account of what took place, which I prefer to quote rather than to give one of my own, which could only be compiled from the public journals of the time:

In February, 1856, I was in London, with a portion of my family, and had lodgings at Fenton's Hotel, St. James Street. Shortly after I reached London, Mr. Buchanan, who was then our minister at the court of St. James, gave up his own residence and came to the same hotel with us, where for some weeks he remained, taking his meals in our rooms. I had known Mr. Buchanan for some years, but never intimately until this time. During my stay in London, I became much interested in his nomination for the Presidency, and frequently spoke to him about the action of the National Democratic Convention to be held in Cincinnati in June, 1856, and expressed to him the hope that he would be the nominee of the party. He said that so great an honor could hardly be expected to fall to his lot, as he had made little effort to secure the nomination, and his absence for so long a time from home had prevented any organization of his friends to that end, save what Mr. Slidell in Louisiana, Mr. Schell in New York, and his own nearest political friends in Pennsylvania, had been able to effect, and that he thought it very unlikely that he could receive the nomination. After a few weeks in London,



Mr. Buchanan joined us in a visit to the continent, remaining in Paris about ten days, and he then embarked for the United States.

I returned to New York in the early part of May, and shortly afterwards went to Cincinnati, upon business connected with an unfinished railroad, in which I was interested, and as the day for the meeting of the convention approached, I was surprised to find a lack of all organization on behalf of the friends of Mr. Buchanan, and was satisfied that his nomination was impossible, unless earnest efforts to that end were made, and at once.

I had taken a large dwelling-house in Cincinnati for my own temporary use, and shortly before the meeting of the convention, I wrote to my political friends in Washington who were friendly to him, telling them the condition of things, and that unless they came to Cincinnati without delay, I thought Mr. Buchanan stood no chance for the nomination. Among others I wrote to Mr. Slidell, Mr. Benjamin, Mr. James A. Bayard, and Mr. Bright, all of whom were then in the United States Senate. I promised them accommodations at my house, and, much to my gratification, they all answered that they would make up a party and come to Cincinnati, to reach there the day before the meeting of the convention. Before the time of their arrival, prominent Democrats from all sections of the country had reached Cincinnati, and the friends of Mr. Douglas were very prominent in asserting his claims to the nomination, through thoroughly organized and noisy committees.

A consultation was held at my house, the evening before the meeting of the convention, and it was evident that if the New York delegation, represented by Mr. Dean Richmond and his associates, who were known as the "Softs," secured seats, that the nomination of Mr. Douglas was inevitable. The other branch of the New York Democrats, who called themselves "Hards," was represented by Mr. Schell as the head of that organization.

When the convention was organized, Senator James A. Bayard, of Delaware, was made chairman of the Committee on Credentials, and to that committee was referred the claims of the two rival Democratic delegations from New York. The remainder of that day, and much of the night following, were passed in the earnest and noisy presentation of the claims of these two factions to be represented in the convention, each to the exclusion of the other, and it was soon discovered that a majority of this committee was in favor of the "Soft," or Douglas delegation. A minority of this committee, headed by Mr. Bayard, favored the admission of one-half of the delegates of each branch of the party, so that the vote of New York in the convention might be thereby equally divided between Mr. Douglas and Mr. Buchanan. The preparation of the minority report to this end occupied all the night, and it was not completed until nine o'clock of the following morning, the hour of the meeting of the convention. So soon as we could copy this report, I took it to Mr. Bayard, the convention being already in session.

On the presentation of the majority, or Douglas report, it was moved by the friends of Mr. Buchanan that the minority report should be substituted, and this motion, after a close vote, was adopted by the convention. As was

foreseen, by thus neutralizing the vote of New York, dividing it between the two candidates, Mr. Buchanan retained sufficient strength to secure the nomination, which was then speedily made. There can be little doubt that this result was achieved almost wholly by the efforts of the friends of Mr. Buchanan, who were induced at the last moment to come to Cincinnati. Our house became the headquarters of all the friends of Mr. Buchanan. Every move that was made emanated from some one of the gentlemen there present, and but for their presence and active coöperation, there is little doubt that Mr. Douglas would have been nominated upon the first ballot after organization.

Mr. Slidell was naturally the leader of the friends of Mr. Buchanan. His calmness, shrewdness and earnest friendship for Mr. Buchanan were recognized by all, and whatever he advised was promptly assented to. At his request, I was present at all interviews with the delegates from all parts of the country, which preceded Mr. Buchanan's actual nomination. I heard all that was said on these occasions, and when the news of the nomination came from the convention to our headquarters, Mr. Slidell at once said to me: "Now, you will bear me witness, that in all that has taken place, I have made no promises, and am under no commitments on behalf of Mr. Buchanan to anybody. He takes this place without obligations to any section of the country, or to any individual. He is as free to do as he sees fit as man ever was. Some of his friends deserve recognition, and at the proper time I shall say so to him, and I think he will be governed by my suggestions, but if he should not be, no one can find fault, as I have made no promises."

After the election, at the request of Mr. Buchanan, I met him on the occasion of his first visit to Washington, before the inauguration. I went to his room with Mr. Slidell. He had then seen no one in Washington. In this first interview, Mr. Slidell repeated to him, almost verbatim, the language which he had used to me in Cincinnati, as to the President being entirely free and uncommitted by any promise or obligation of any sort, made to anybody, previous to his nomination.

I do not know that the matters to which I have alluded will be of any interest to you, but I have recalled them with much pleasure as showing, contrary to the generally received opinion as to Mr. Buchanan's shrewdness as a politician and "wire-puller," that when he left London, there was no organization or pretence of organization in his favor, that could be considered effective or likely to be useful, outside of the efforts of a few personal friends in the South, in Pennsylvania and New York; and before he returned to America, he evidently saw that he had little chance of success before the convention. The same marked absence of organization, and of all political machine-work, was evident up to the day before the meeting of the convention, when the friends of Mr. Buchanan, whom I had thus suddenly called together, made their appearance in Cincinnati.

Mr. Buchanan's opposition to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise left him without support from the ultra Southern leaders, many of whom believed that Mr. Douglas would be less difficult to manage than Mr. Buchanan.

Louisiana was controlled through the personal influence of Messrs. Slidell and Benjamin, and Virginia was from the beginning in favor of Mr. Buchanan's nomination. Apart from these States, the South was for Pierce or Douglas. Mr. Buchanan's strength was from the North, but it was unorganized.

To that time, no one had undertaken to speak for him. There were no headquarters where his friends could meet even for consultation. There was no leader—no one whose opinions upon questions of policy were controlling, and but for this almost accidental combination of his friends in Cincinnati, it was apparent that Mr. Buchanan could not have been nominated, simply because of this utter lack of that ordinary preliminary organization necessary to success, which was by his opponents alleged to be the foundation of his strength, but which in fact was wholly without existence.

Mr. Slidell undertook this task, and before the meeting of the convention Mr. Buchanan's success was assured.\*

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\* The prominence given by Mr. Barlow to Mr. Slidell, as an active and earnest friend of Mr. Buchanan, led me to ask him to add a sketch of that distinguished man; and I have been at the greater pains to show the strong friendship that subsisted between Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Slidell, because, as will be seen hereafter, when the secession troubles of the last year of Mr. Buchanan's administration came on, this friendship was one of the first sacrifices made by him to his public duty, for he did not allow it to influence his course in the slightest degree; and although he had to accept with pain the alienation which Mr. Slidell and all his other Southern friends, in the ardor of their feelings, deemed unavoidable, he accepted it as one of the sad necessities of his position and of the time. I think he and Mr. Slidell never met, after the month of January, 1861. The following is Mr. Barlow's sketch of John Slidell:—

"He was born in the city of New York in 1795; was graduated at Columbia College in 1810, and entered commercial life, which he soon abandoned for the study of the law. He removed to Louisiana in 1825, and was shortly afterwards admitted to the bar of that State. In 1829 he was appointed United States district attorney for the Louisiana district by President Jackson, and from that time took an active part in the politics of the State. He was soon recognized, not only as one of the ablest and most careful lawyers, but as the practical political head of the Democratic party of the Southwest.

"In 1842 he was elected to Congress from the New Orleans district. In 1845 he was appointed by President Polk as minister to Mexico. This mission was foredoomed to failure. The annexation of Texas made a war with Mexico inevitable, but the broad sense shown by Mr. Slidell in his despatches from Mexico was fully recognized by the administration of President Polk, and his views were maintained, and his advice was followed, to the time of the breaking out of hostilities.

"In 1853 he was elected to the United States Senate to fill an unexpired term, and in 1854 was again elected for a full term, which had not expired when the secession of Louisiana in 1861 put it at an end.

"He was shortly afterwards sent to France as a commissioner on behalf of the Confederate States. On his voyage to that country he was taken from the British steamer 'Trent,' and was imprisoned at Fort Warren in Boston Harbor. His release by President Lincoln, under the advice of Mr. Seward, will be remembered as one of the most exciting and important incidents in the early history of the war. He remained in Paris as the Commissioner of the Confederate States until the termination of the rebellion, and during that period was probably the most active and effective agent of the Confederacy abroad.

"His influence with the government of Louis Napoleon was very great, and at one time, chiefly through his persuasion, the emperor, as Mr. Slidell believed, had determined to recognize the Confederacy; but fortunately this political mistake was averted by the great victory gained by General McClellan over the Confederate army at Antietam.

"In 1835 Mr. Slidell was married to Miss Mathilde deLande, of an old Creole family of

When officially informed of his nomination by a committee, Mr. Buchanan, on the 16th of June (1856), made this simple and straightforward answer :

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 13th inst., informing me officially of my nomination by the Democratic National Convention, recently held at Cincinnati, as a candidate for the office of President of the United States. I shall not attempt to express the grateful feelings which I entertain towards my Democratic fellow-citizens for having deemed me worthy of this—the highest political honor on earth—an honor such as no other people have the power to bestow. Deeply sensible of the vast and varied responsibility attached to the station, especially at the present crisis in our affairs, I have carefully refrained from seeking the nomination, either by word or by deed. Now that it has been offered by the Democratic party, I accept it with diffidence in my own abilities, but with an humble trust that, in the event of my election, Divine Providence may enable me to discharge my duty in such a manner as to allay domestic strife, preserve peace and friendship with foreign nations, and promote the best interests of the Republic.

In accepting the nomination, I need scarcely say that I accept, in the same spirit, the resolutions constituting the platform of principles erected by the convention. To this platform I intend to conform myself throughout the canvass, believing that I have no right, as the candidate of the Democratic party, by answering interrogatories, to present new and different issues before the people.

In all Presidential elections which have occurred for the past fifty years, the State election in Pennsylvania, occurring in the autumn before the election of a President, has been regarded as of great importance. The Republican party was now in the field, with General Fremont as its candidate, and with the advantage which it had derived in all the free States from the consequences of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, the

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Louisiana. He died at Cowes in England in 1871. His pure personal character, his indomitable and coercive will, his undoubted courage, and his cool and deliberate good sense gave him a high place among the advisers of the Confederate cause from its earliest organization to its final collapse.

"One of his most striking characteristics, for which he was noted through life, was his unswerving fidelity to his political friends. From the lowest in the ranks to those of the highest station, who were his allies and advocates, not one was forgotten when political victory was secured, and no complaint was ever justly made against him for forgetfulness of those through whom his own political career was established, or to whom, through his influence, the success of his political friends was achieved.

"With strangers Mr. Slidell's manners were reserved, and at times even haughty, but to those who were admitted to the privacy of his domestic life, or who once gained his confidence in politics, he was most genial, gracious, and engaging."



passage of the so-called "Kansas-Nebraska Act," which had been followed in Kansas by an internecine contest between pro-slavery and anti-slavery settlers. A brutal personal assault upon Senator Sumner, of Massachusetts, by a rash and foolish Southerner, had added fuel to the already kindled sectional flame of Northern feeling. The precise political issue between the Democratic and Republican parties, so far as it related to slavery, concerned of course slavery in the Territories. It was apparent that if the Republicans should gain the State of Pennsylvania in the State election of October, there was a very strong probability, rather a moral certainty, that the electoral votes of all the free States in the Presidential election would be obtained by that party, while there was no probability that it would prevail in a single slave-holding State. The political issue, therefore, was whether the sectional division of the free and the slave States in the election of a President was to come then, or whether it was to be averted. The State election in Pennsylvania, in October, turned in favor of the Democrats. Her twenty-seven electoral votes were thus morally certain to be given to Mr. Buchanan in the Presidential election. In the interval, a large body of his friends and neighbors assembled at Wheatland, and called him out. His remarks, never before printed, are now extant in his handwriting. He said :

MY FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS :—

I am glad to see you and to receive and reciprocate your congratulations upon the triumph of the Democrats in Pennsylvania and Indiana.

It is my sober and solemn conviction that Mr. Fillmore uttered the words of soberness and truth when he declared that if the Northern sectional party should succeed, it would lead inevitably to the destruction of this beautiful fabric reared by our forefathers, cemented by their blood, and bequeathed to us as a priceless inheritance.

The people of the North seem to have forgotten the warning of the Father of his Country against geographical parties. And by far the most dangerous of all such parties is that of a combined North against a combined South on the question of slavery. This is no mere political question—no question addressing itself to the material interests of men. It rises far higher. With the South it is a question of self-preservation, of personal security around the family altar, of life or of death. The Southern people still cherish a love for the Union; but what to them is even our blessed confederacy, the wisest and the best form of government ever devised by man, if they cannot enjoy its

blessings and its benefits without being in constant alarm for their wives and children.

The storm of abolition against the South has been gathering for almost a quarter of a century. It had been increasing by every various form of agitation which fanaticism could devise. We had reached the crisis. The danger was imminent. Republicanism was sweeping over the North like a tornado. It appeared to be resistless in its course. The blessed Union of these States—the last hope for human liberty on earth—appeared to be tottering on its base. Had Pennsylvania yielded, had she become an abolition State, without a special interposition of Divine Providence, we should have been precipitated into the yawning gulf of dissolution. But she stood erect and firm as her own Alleghanies. She breasted the storm and drove it back. The night is departing, and the roseate and propitious morn now breaking upon us promises a long day of peace and prosperity for our country. To secure this, all we of the North have to do is to permit our Southern neighbors to manage their own domestic affairs, as they permit us to manage ours. It is merely to adopt the golden rule, and do unto them as we would they should do unto us, in the like circumstances. All they ask from us is simply to let them alone. This is the whole spirit and essence of the much abused Cincinnati platform. This does no more than adopt the doctrine which is the very root of all our institutions, and recognize the right of a majority of the people of a Territory, when about to enter the Union as a State, to decide for themselves whether domestic slavery shall or shall not exist among them. This is not to favor the extension of slavery, but simply to deny the right of an abolitionist in Massachusetts or Vermont to prescribe to the people of Kansas what they shall or shall not do in regard to this question.

Who contests the principle that the will of the majority shall govern? What genuine republican of any party can deny this? The opposition have never met this question fairly. Within a brief period, the people of this country will condemn their own folly for suffering the assertion of so plain and elementary a principle of all popular governments to have endangered our blessed Constitution and Union, which owe their origin to this very principle.

I congratulate you, my friends and neighbors, that peace has been restored to Kansas. As a Pennsylvanian I rejoice that this good work has been accomplished by two sons of our good old mother State, God bless her! We have reason to be proud of Colonel Geary and General Smith. We shall hear no more of bleeding Kansas. There will be no more shrieks for her unhappy destiny. The people of this fine country, protected from external violence and internal commotion, will decide the question of slavery for themselves, and then slide gracefully into the Union and become one of the sisters in our great Confederacy.

Indeed, viewed in the eye of sober reason, this Kansas question is one of the most absurd of all the Proteus-like forms which abolition fanaticism has ever assumed to divide and distract the country. And why do I say this? Kansas might enter the Union with a free constitution to-day, and once

admitted, no human power known to the Constitution could prevent her from establishing slavery to-morrow. No free-soiler has ever even contended that she would not possess this power.

The result of the election shows, with great distinctness, the following facts: 1st. That Mr. Buchanan was chosen President, because he received the electoral votes of the five free States of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Indiana, Illinois and California (62 in all), and that without them he could not have been elected. 2d. That his Southern vote (that of every slaveholding State excepting Maryland) was partly given to him because of his conservative opinions and position, and partly because the candidate for the Vice-Presidency, Mr. Breckinridge, was a Southern man. 3d. That General Fremont received the electoral vote of no Southern State, and that this was due partly to the character of the Republican party and its Northern tone, and partly to the fact that the Republican candidate for the Vice Presidency (Mr. Dayton, of New Jersey), was a citizen of a non-slaveholding State. General Fremont himself was nominally a citizen of California. This election, therefore, foreshadowed the sectional division which would be almost certain to happen in the next one, if the four years of Mr. Buchanan's administration should not witness a subsidence in the sectional feelings between the North and the South. It would only be necessary for the Republicans to wrest from the Democratic party the five free States which had voted for Mr. Buchanan, and they would elect the President in 1860. Whether this was to happen, would depend upon the ability of the Democratic party to avoid a rupture into factions that would themselves be representatives of irreconcilable dogmas on the subject of slavery in the Territories. Hence it is that Mr. Buchanan's course as President, for the three first years of his term, is to be judged, with reference to the responsibility that was upon him to so conduct the Government as to disarm, if possible, the antagonism of section to section. His administration of affairs after the election of Mr. Lincoln is to be judged simply by his duty as the Executive, in the most extraordinary and anomalous crisis in which the country had ever been placed.

I take from the multitude of private letters written or received during and after the election, a few of the most interesting :—

[FROM THE HON. JAMES MACGREGOR.]

HOUSE OF COMMONS, June 20, 1856.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I am, indeed, very happy to receive to-day the decision with regard to you at Cincinnati, and God grant the result be as successful as I wish. The feeling in this house, and I am sure in the country, is, I believe firmly, such as you could wish. I wish that miserable dispute about Central America were dissipated; for my part, I believe that if not only Central America, but all Spanish America, south of California, were possessed and governed by an Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-American race, the more would the progress of civilization, the progress of industry and commerce, and the happiness of mankind be advanced.

I went over to Paris a few days after you left for Havre. Saw much of Mr. Mason, Mr. Corbin and Mr. Childs. The latter drew me a most able statement relative to the disputes with America, which I made good use of, on my return, with Lord Palmerston.

You will observe that even the meretricious *Times*, which I send you a copy of, is coming to be more reasonable; although I cannot trust that journal, which, I believe, was truly characterized by O'Connell, in the House of Commons, as representing "the sagacity of the rat and the morality of a harlot." I write in great haste for the post; but believe me always, and with my very kindest regards to Miss Lane,

Faithfully yours,

J. MACGREGOR.

[TO WILLIAM B. REED, ESQ.]

Monday Morning, July 7, 1856.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I return Mr. Stevenson's letter with thanks. He appears to be "a marvelous proper man." There never was a more unfounded falsehood than that of my connection with the bargain, or alleged bargain. At the time I was a young member of Congress, not on terms of intimacy with either Jackson or Clay. It is true I admired both, and wished to see the one President and the other Secretary of State; and after Mr. Clay had been instructed by the Kentucky legislature to vote for Jackson, I believed my wish would be accomplished. It must have been then that I had the conversation with Mr. Clay, in Letcher's room, to which Colton refers, for I declare I have not the least trace on my memory of any such conversation. Had I known anything of the previous history of Jackson and Clay, I could not have believed it possible that the former would appoint the latter Secretary. A conversation

of a few minutes with Jackson on the street on a cold and stormy day of December, fully related by me in 1827, and a meeting with Mr. Clay in Letcher's room, and a conversation perfectly harmless as stated, have brought me into serious difficulties.

Your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[TO THE HON. JAMES C. DOBBIN.\*.]

BEDFORD SPRINGS, August 20, 1856.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Your favor of the 13th instant did not reach me at the Bedford Springs until I was about leaving, hence the delay of my answer. I did not reach home until the night before the last.

I congratulate you, with all my heart, on the result of your election. The population of the old North State is steady and conservative. Of it you may be justly proud. The Southern States now promise to be a unit at the approaching Presidential election. Maryland is still considered doubtful, but the changes in our favor have been great within the last three weeks. The letters of Messrs. Pierce and Pratt have had a happy effect.

I am glad to learn that our foreign affairs are assuming a favorable aspect. I most heartily approved of the dismissal of Mr. Crampton, and would have been quite as well satisfied had he been sent home in the last autumn. About the present condition of the Central American questions I knew nothing until the receipt of your letter, except from the revelations in the British Parliament, which I know, from experience, are not reliable. Mr. Dallas said nothing to me about his instructions or the views of the President, and, of course, I did not solicit his confidence. The question of the Bay Islands is too clear for serious doubt. Lord Aberdeen, the purest and most just of British statesmen, when premier gave it up, as is shown by my correspondence with the State Department, and it is highly probable Great Britain may make a virtue of necessity, and surrender these islands to Honduras to whom they clearly belong.

I am glad to learn that the President enjoys good health, notwithstanding the fatigue, troubles, and responsibility incident to his position. I concur with you in opinion as to the character of his manly and excellent address on the receipt of the intelligence from Cincinnati. It was no more than what might have been expected from him by all who knew him. My aspirations for the Presidency had all died four years ago, and I never felt the slightest personal interest in securing the nomination. It was easy to foresee the impending crisis, and that the Union itself might depend on the result of the election. In this view, whilst we all have everything near and dear to us of a political character at stake, the President of all men has the deepest interest in the result. My election, so far as I am personally concerned is a very small matter; but as identified with the leading measures of his administration, the preservation of

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\* Secretary of the Navy under President Pierce.

the Constitution and the Union, and the maintenance of the equality of the States, and of the right of the people of a Territory to decide the question of slavery for themselves, in their constitution, before entering the Union, it is a subject of vast and transcendent importance.

Most cordially reciprocating your friendly sentiments towards myself, and wishing you all the blessings which you can desire, I remain, as ever, very respectfully,

Your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[TO NAHUM CAPEN, ESQ., OF BOSTON.]

WHEATLAND, August 27, 1856.

MY DEAR SIR:—

On my return from Bedford Springs on Monday night, I found your favor of the 22d instant, and your manuscript. The latter I have endeavored to find the time to read with care, but this has been impossible. I have, therefore, only been able to glance over it. It is written with characteristic ability, and that portion of it which gives extracts from my speeches has been prepared with much labor and discrimination. I have not seen the manuscript of any biography of mine before publication, nor have I read any one of them since, and this simply because I did not choose to be identified with any of them.

For my own part, I consider that all incidental questions are comparatively of little importance in the Presidential question, when compared with the grand and appalling issue of union or disunion. Should Fremont be elected, he must receive 149 Northern electoral votes at the least, and the outlawry proclaimed by the Republican convention at Philadelphia against fifteen Southern States will be ratified by the people of the North. The consequence will be *immediate* and inevitable. In this region, the battle is fought mainly on this issue. We have so often cried "wolf," that now, when the wolf is at the door, it is difficult to make the people believe it; but yet the sense of danger is slowly and surely making its way in this region.

After reflection and consultation, I stated in my letter of acceptance substantially, that I would make no issues beyond the platform, and have, therefore, avoided giving my sanction to any publication containing opinions with which I might be identified, and prove unsatisfactory to some portions of the Union. I must continue to stand on this ground. Had it not been for this cause, I should have embraced your kind offer, and asked you to prepare a biography for me, and furnished the materials. Indeed, I often thought of this.

I am deeply and gratefully sensible of your friendship, and therefore most reluctantly adopt the course towards you which I have done to all other friends under like circumstances.

In the cursory glance I have been able to take of your manuscript, I observed one or two errors. In page 37 of No. 1, my allusion was to Mrs. Adams, and not to Mrs. Jackson. I entered college at the age of sixteen, not

of fourteen, having been previously prepared for the Junior class. It is not the fact that I accepted no compensation for trying the widow's cause. "Millions for defence, but not a cent for tribute," was not original with me.

I am so surrounded, I regret I cannot write more, and still more deeply regret that my omission to sanction your very able manuscript may give you pain. I sincerely wish you had referred it to the National Committee, or to the committee in your own State.

We are fighting the battle in this State almost solely *on the great issue*, with energy and confidence. I do not think there is any reason to apprehend the result, certainly none at the Presidential election, so far as Pennsylvania is concerned.

In haste, I remain always, very respectfully, your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[TO WILLIAM B. REED, ESQ.]

WHEATLAND, September 8, 1856.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favor of the 5th inst. I do not recollect the names of the two members of the Society of Friends to whom you refer; but should you deem it important, I can, with some trouble, find the original letter. I have no doubt Dr. Parrish was one of them. He, William Wharton and Joseph Foulke were the three gentlemen referred to in my remarks on the 25th April, 1836, in presenting the petition of the Society of Friends against the admission of Arkansas, etc. They not only acquiesced in my course, but requested me to procure for them a number of copies of the *National Intelligencer* containing my remarks, and left Washington entirely satisfied. (Vide the volume of the Register of Debates, to which you refer, pages 1277 and 1278.)

I cannot procure the *London Quarterly* in Lancaster. I took the Reviews in England, but neglected to order them since my return. I have no doubt it does me great injustice. I was so popular personally in England, that whenever I appeared at public dinners, etc., I was enthusiastically cheered; but now they are all for Fremont . . . . ., and a dissolution of the Union.

I am gratified that you have sent me Mr. Stevenson's letter. I have no doubt he is a gentleman of fastidious honor as well as much ability. Although a patient and much-enduring man, I have never had patience about "the bargain and sale story." So far as I am concerned, it all arose from the misapprehension by General Jackson of as innocent a conversation on the street, on my part, as I ever had with any person. I cannot charge myself even with the slightest imprudence. And then, as a rebutter, a conversation equally innocent, in Letcher's room, about the particulars of which I have no more recollection than if it had never taken place. Still, I have not the least doubt it has been stated accurately; because it is just what I would have said

under the circumstances, and in entire ignorance of the nature of the personal relations between General Jackson and Mr. Clay. Blair's exposé has fallen dead, so far as I can learn.

(Private and confidential.)

WHEATLAND, September 14, 1856.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have at length found, and now enclose, the letter to which you refer. I have very often spoken in the Senate on the subject of slavery in the different forms which the question has assumed, but have not the time at the present moment to look over the debates.

I have recently received a letter from Governor Wright, of Indiana, who informs me it would be of great importance in that State should the *National Intelligencer* come out in favor of the Democratic candidates. He had heard, as we have done, that such was the intention of its editors, after the adjournment of Congress. But they have at length come out in favor of Fremont. I say this, because they scout the idea that the Union would be in danger from his election. . . . Better they had at once raised the Republican flag. This opinion they have expressed, notwithstanding I am in the daily receipt of letters from the South, which are truly alarming, and these from gentlemen who formerly opposed both nullification and disunion. They say explicitly that the election of Fremont involves the dissolution of the Union, and this immediately. They allege that they are now looking on calmly for the North to decide their fate. When I say from the South, I refer to the States south of the Potomac. These evidences of public determination first commenced in the extreme South; but now the same calm and determined spirit appears to pervade Virginia. Indeed, the most alarming letter I have received has been from Virginia, and this, too, from a prudent, tranquil and able man, who has for some years been out of public life from his own choice. The remarks of the *National Intelligencer* will either serve to delude the Northern people, or the Southrons are insincere. God save the Union! I do not wish to survive it.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

P. S.—I refer to the article in the *Intelligencer* of the 11th instant, headed, "The Balance Wheels of the Government." One gentleman informs me that the men who were our contemporaries when the States lived in peace with each other, before the slavery excitement commenced, have passed away, and they have been succeeded by a new generation, who have grown up pending the slavery agitation. He says that they have been constantly assailed by the North, and now have as much hatred for the people of New England as the latter have for them; and many now deem that it would be for the mutual advantage of all parties to have a Southern Confederation, in which they can live at peace. I have received such communications with regret and astonishment.



[TO A CITIZEN OF CALIFORNIA.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, PENN., Sept. 17, 1856.

SIR:—

I have received numerous communications from sources in California, entitled to high regard, in reference to the proposed Pacific Railroad. As it would be impossible for me to answer them all, I deem it most proper and respectful to address you a general answer in your official capacity. In performing this duty to the citizens of California, I act in perfect consistency with the self-imposed restriction contained in my letter accepting the nomination for the Presidency, not to answer interrogatories raising new and different issues from those presented by the Cincinnati convention, because that convention has itself adopted a resolution in favor of this great work. I, then, desire to state briefly that, concurring with the convention, I am decidedly favorable to the construction of the Pacific Railroad; and I derive the authority to do this from the constitutional power "to declare war," and the constitutional duty "to repel invasions." In my judgment, Congress possess the same power to make appropriations for the construction of this road, strictly for the purpose of national defence, that they have to erect fortifications at the mouth of the harbor of San Francisco. Indeed, the necessity, with a view to repel foreign invasion from California, is as great in the one case as in the other. Neither will there be danger from the precedent, for it is almost impossible to conceive that any case attended by such extraordinary and unprecedented circumstances can ever again occur in our history.

Yours very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

To B. F. WASHINGTON, Esq., Chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee of California.

[TO JOSHUA BATES, ESQ., LONDON.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, Nov. 6, 1856.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I received in due time your kind congratulatory letter of the 10th July, which I should have immediately answered had I been able to express a decided opinion as to the result of the Presidential election. It was one of the most severe political struggles through which we have ever passed. The preachers and fanatics of New England had excited the people to such a degree on the slavery questions, that they generally prayed and preached against me from their pulpits on Sunday last, throughout that land of "isms." Your information from Massachusetts was entirely unfounded—Boston is a sad place. In that city they have re-elected to Congress a factious fanatic, . . . . . who, in a public speech, said that we must have an anti-slavery Constitution, an anti-slavery Bible, and an anti-slavery God.

Whilst the British press, by their violent attacks, did me much good service, I very much regretted their hostile publications, because it was and is

my sincere desire to cultivate the most friendly relations with that country. The *Times* does England much injury, at least in foreign nations; it has made the English unpopular throughout the continent, and keeps alive the ancient prejudice which still exists in large portions of our country. In very many of the Democratic papers, throughout the late canvass, beautiful extracts from the *Thunderer*, the *Chronicle*, and other English journals, were kept standing at the head of their columns. But enough of this. I most sincerely hope the Central American questions may be settled before the 4th of March. I know nothing of their condition at present. I never doubted in regard to the true construction of the treaty, nor did I ever consider it doubtful. The purest and the wisest statesmen I met in England agreed with me in regard to the construction of the treaty. If we are to be as good friends as I desire we may be, your government ought to be careful to select the proper man as minister, and not send us some government pet simply because they have no other provision for him. I have said much to Lord Clarendon on this subject before I had the slightest idea of becoming President. By the bye, I like his lordship personally very much, as well as Lord Palmerston. They are both agreeable and witty companions, as well as great statesmen. I should like them much better, however, if their friendly feelings were a little stronger for this country. I have no doubt they both, as you say, expressed their satisfaction at the prospect of my becoming President. This was, however, at an early day. They have probably since changed their opinion. I have been a good deal quizzed by private friends since I came home, [because] I spoke in strong and warm terms of the kindness and civility which had been extended to me in England, and of the vast importance to both countries and to the world that friendly feelings between the two countries should be cherished by the governments and people of each. How often have the articles from British newspapers been cast up to me as a comment upon my remarks. They have, however, produced no effect upon my feelings. I was delighted to see Sir Henry Holland, and to gossip with him about valued friends and acquaintances on the other side of the water. Please to remember me very kindly to Mrs. Bates, and Miss Lane desires me to present her warm regards to you both. It is long since I have heard from Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[FROM THE HON. EDWARD EVERETT.]

Boston, Dec. 8th, 1856.

MY DEAR SIR:—

. . . . . I can hardly congratulate you on your election, first, because I did not vote for you (unless upon the theory that every vote given to Fillmore was in effect given to you), and second, because I fear that to be chosen President is not a thing upon which a friend is to be congratulated, in the present state of the country.

You have my best wishes, however, for a prosperous administration. I devoutly hope that you will be able to check the progress of sectional feeling. The policy of the present administration has greatly impaired (as you are well aware) the conservative feeling of the North, has annihilated the Whig party, and seriously weakened the Democratic party in all the free States.

Though much opposed to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, we could have stood that, but the subsequent events in Kansas gave us the *coup de grace*. Those events, and the assault on Mr. Sumner, gave its formidable character and strength to the Republican nomination. You can do nothing directly to prevent the occurrence of events like the assault, but you may, even in advance of the 4th of March, do much to bring about a better state of things in Kansas, and prevent the enemies of the Constitution from continuing to make capital out of it.

I am, dear sir, with much regard and sincere good wishes,

Very truly yours,

EDWARD EVERETT.

[TO THE HON. JOHN Y. MASON.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, December 29, 1856.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Ere this can reach Paris, you will doubtless have received my letter to Miss Wight. I shall not repeat what I have said to her, because such is the pressure now upon me that I have scarce time to say my prayers. This I can say in perfect good faith, that the man don't live whom it would afford me greater pleasure to serve than yourself. In this spirit I have determined that you shall not be disturbed during the next year, no matter what may be the pressure upon me. I am not committed, either directly or indirectly, to any human being for any appointment, but yet I cannot mistake the strong current of public opinion in favor of changing public functionaries, both abroad and at home, who have served a reasonable time. They say, and that, too, with considerable force, that if the officers under a preceding Democratic administration shall be continued by a succeeding administration of the same political character, this must necessarily destroy the party. This, perhaps, ought not to be so, but we cannot change human nature.

The great object of my administration will be to arrest, if possible, the agitation of the slavery question at the North, and to destroy sectional parties. Should a kind Providence enable me to succeed in my efforts to restore harmony to the Union, I shall feel that I have not lived in vain.

I beg of you to say nothing to any of your colleagues in Europe about your continuance in office during the next year. Had it been announced I had informed you, in answer to Miss Wight, that you should continue indefinitely in office, this would have done both you and myself injury. We know not what may transpire in 1857, and therefore, in reference to the mission

after that period, I can say nothing. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Even if I had the time, I could not communicate any news to you which you will not see in the papers. The pressure for office will be nearly as great as though I had succeeded a Whig administration.

With my kind and affectionate regards to Mrs. Mason and your excellent family, and cordially wishing you and them many a happy Christmas and many a prosperous New Year, I remain, always,

Very respectfully your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

P. S.—In reading over my letter, I find it is quite too cold in reference to Mary Ann, and therefore I beg to send her my love.

## CHAPTER IX.

1857—1858.

INAUGURATION AS PRESIDENT—SELECTION OF A CABINET—THE DISTURBANCES IN KANSAS—MR. BUCHANAN'S CONSTRUCTION OF THE KANSAS-NEBRASKA ACT, AND OF THE "PLATFORM" ON WHICH HE WAS ELECTED—FINAL ADMISSION OF KANSAS INTO THE UNION.

FROM the communication which has been furnished to me by Mr. James Buchanan Henry, I select the following account of the period preceding the inauguration of his uncle as President, on the 4th of March, 1857:

Soon after Mr. Buchanan's election to the Presidency, he sent for me—I was in Philadelphia, where I had begun the practice of the law—to come to Wheatland. He then told me that he had selected me to be his private secretary, and spoke to me gravely of the temptations by which I should probably be assailed in that position. Soon afterwards prominent men and politicians began to make their way to Wheatland in great numbers, and the stream increased steadily until the departure of Mr. Buchanan for Washington.

In addition to personal attendance upon the President-elect, I soon had my hands full of work in examining and briefing the daily mails, which were burdened with letters of recommendation from individuals, committees and delegations of various States, in regard to the cabinet appointments and a few of the more important offices. Mr. Buchanan was also preparing his inaugural address with his usual care and painstaking, and I copied his drafts and recopied them until he had it prepared to his satisfaction. It underwent no alteration after he went to the National Hotel in Washington, except that he there inserted a clause in regard to the question then pending in the Supreme Court, as one that would dispose of a vexed and dangerous topic by the highest judicial authority of the land. When the time came to leave Wheatland for the capital, preliminary to his inauguration, Mr. Buchanan, Miss Lane, Miss Hetty and I drove into Lancaster in his carriage, escorted all the way to the railway station by a great and enthusiastic crowd of Lancaster citizens and personal friends, with a band of music, although it was very early on a bleak winter morning. I remember his modestly remarking upon the vast crowd thus doing reverence to a mortal man. At the station he was met by an ardent personal and political friend, Robert Magraw, then president of the Northern Central Railroad, and received into a special

car, built for the occasion, and the windows of which were in colors and represented familiar scenes of and about Wheatland. After receiving ovations all along the way, especially at Baltimore, the President-elect and party arrived safely in Washington. We were somewhat fearful that Mr. Buchanan might be seriously embarrassed during the inaugural ceremonies from the effects of what was then known as the National Hotel disease, a disorder which, from no cause that we could then discover, had attacked nearly every guest at the house, and from the dire effects of which many never wholly recovered. Dr. Foltz, a naval surgeon, whose appointment in the service, many years before, Mr. Buchanan had assisted, was in constant attendance upon him, and I remember that he and I went together to the Capitol in a carriage just behind the one that conveyed the retiring President and the President-elect, and that he had occasion to administer remedies. The inauguration ceremonies, the ball, and the first reception at the White House by the new President, were very largely attended and successful. It happened that they took place during a short era of good feeling among all shades of politics and party, but unhappily an era of peace destined soon to terminate in bitter discord over the Lecompton Constitution, or Kansas question, and by the more disastrous following appeal to the passions of the two great political sections of the North and the South, which so nearly ended the administration in blood. The dinners at the White House, during the first year, were attended by Republicans as well as Democrats, with great seeming friendship and good-will.

The Inaugural Address of the new President was as follows:

FELLOW-CITIZENS: I appear before you this day to take the solemn oath "that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States."

In entering upon this great office, I most humbly invoke the God of our fathers for wisdom and firmness to execute its high and responsible duties in such a manner as to restore harmony and ancient friendship among the people of the several States, and to preserve our free institutions throughout many generations. Convinced that I owe my election to the inherent love for the Constitution and the Union which still animates the hearts of the American people, let me earnestly ask their powerful support in sustaining all just measures calculated to perpetuate these, the richest political blessings which Heaven has ever bestowed upon any nation. Having determined not to become a candidate for re-election, I shall have no motive to influence my conduct in administering the government except the desire ably and faithfully to serve my country, and to live in the grateful memory of my countrymen.

We have recently passed through a presidential contest in which the pas-

sions of our fellow-citizens were excited to the highest degree by questions of deep and vital importance; but when the people proclaimed their will, the tempest at once subsided, and all was calm.

The voice of the majority, speaking in the manner prescribed by the Constitution, was heard, and instant submission followed. Our own country could alone have exhibited so grand and striking a spectacle of the capacity of man for self-government.

What a happy conception, then, was it for Congress to apply this simple rule—that the will of the majority shall govern—to the settlement of the question of domestic slavery in the Territories! Congress is neither “to legislate slavery into any Territory or State, nor to exclude it therefrom, but to leave the people thereof perfectly free to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States.” As a natural consequence, Congress has also prescribed that, when the Territory of Kansas shall be admitted as a State, it “shall be received into the Union, with or without slavery, as their constitution may prescribe at the time of their admission.”

A difference of opinion has arisen in regard to the point of time when the people of a Territory shall decide this question for themselves.

This is, happily, a matter of but little practical importance. Besides, it is a judicial question, which legitimately belongs to the Supreme Court of the United States, before whom it is now pending, and will, it is understood, be speedily and finally settled. To their decision, in common with all good citizens, I shall cheerfully submit, whatever this may be, though it has ever been my individual opinion that, under the Nebraska-Kansas act, the appropriate period will be when the number of actual residents in the Territory shall justify the formation of a constitution with a view to its admission as a State into the Union. But be this as it may, it is the imperative and indispensable duty of the government of the United States to secure to every resident inhabitant the free and independent expression of his opinion by his vote. This sacred right of each individual must be preserved. That being accomplished, nothing can be fairer than to leave the people of a Territory free from all foreign interference, to decide their own destiny for themselves, subject only to the Constitution of the United States.

The whole territorial question being thus settled upon the principle of popular sovereignty—a principle as ancient as free government itself—everything of a practical nature has been decided. No other question remains for adjustment; because all agree that, under the Constitution, slavery in the States is beyond the reach of any human power, except that of the respective States themselves wherein it exists. May we not, then, hope that the long agitation on this subject is approaching its end, and that the geographical parties to which it has given birth, so much dreaded by the Father of his Country, will speedily become extinct? Most happy will it be for the country when the public mind shall be diverted from this question to others of more pressing and practical importance. Throughout the whole progress of this

agitation, which has scarcely known any intermission for more than twenty years, whilst it has been productive of no positive good to any human being, it has been the prolific source of great evils to the master, the slave, and to the whole country. It has alienated and estranged the people of the sister States from each other, and has even seriously endangered the very existence of the Union. Nor has the danger yet entirely ceased. Under our system there is a remedy for all mere political evils in the sound sense and sober judgment of the people. Time is a great corrective. Political subjects which but a few years ago excited and exasperated the public mind have passed away and are now nearly forgotten. But this question of domestic slavery is of far graver importance than any mere political question, because, should the agitation continue, it may eventually endanger the personal safety of a large portion of our countrymen where the institution exists. In that event, no form of government, however admirable in itself, and however productive of material benefits, can compensate for the loss of peace and domestic security around the family altar. Let every Union-loving man, therefore, exert his best influence to suppress this agitation, which, since the recent legislation of Congress, is without any legitimate object.

It is an evil omen of the times that men have undertaken to calculate the mere material value of the Union. Reasoned estimates have been presented of the pecuniary profits and local advantages which would result to different States and sections from its dissolution, and of the comparative injuries which such an event would inflict on other States and sections. Even descending to this low and narrow view of the mighty question, all such calculations are at fault. The bare reference to a single consideration will be conclusive on this point. We at present enjoy a free trade throughout our extensive and expanding country, such as the world has never witnessed. This trade is conducted on railroads and canals—on noble rivers and arms of the sea—which bind together the north and the south, the east and the west of our confederacy. Annihilate this trade, arrest its free progress by the geographical lines of jealous and hostile States, and you destroy the prosperity and onward march of the whole and every part, and involve all in one common ruin. But such considerations, important as they are in themselves, sink into insignificance when we reflect on the terrific evils which would result from disunion to every portion of the confederacy—to the north not more than to the south, to the east not more than to the west. These I shall not attempt to portray; because I feel an humble confidence that the kind Providence which inspired our fathers with wisdom to frame the most perfect form of Government and Union ever devised by man will not suffer it to perish until it shall have been peacefully instrumental, by its example, in the extension of civil and religious liberty throughout the world.

Next in importance to the maintenance of the Constitution and the Union is the duty of preserving the government free from the taint, or even the suspicion, of corruption. Public virtue is the vital spirit of republics; and history shows that when this has decayed, and the love of money has usurped its



place, although the forms of free government may remain for a season, the substance has departed forever.

Our present financial condition is without a parallel in history. No nation has ever before been embarrassed from too large a surplus in its treasury. This almost necessarily gives birth to extravagant legislation. It produces wild schemes of expenditure, and begets a race of speculators and jobbers, whose ingenuity is exerted in contriving and promoting expedients to obtain public money. The purity of official agents, whether rightfully or wrongfully, is suspected, and the character of the government suffers in the estimation of the people. This is in itself a very great evil.

The natural mode of relief from this embarrassment is to appropriate the surplus in the treasury to great national objects, for which a clear warrant can be found in the Constitution. Among these I might mention the extinguishment of the public debt, a reasonable increase of the navy, which is at present inadequate to the protection of our vast tonnage afloat, now greater than that of any other nation, as well as to the defence of our extended seacoast.

It is beyond all question the true principle, that no more revenue ought to be collected from the people than the amount necessary to defray the expenses of a wise, economical, and efficient administration of the government. To reach this point, it was necessary to resort to a modification of the tariff; and this has, I trust, been accomplished in such a manner as to do as little injury as may have been practicable to our domestic manufactures, especially those necessary for the defence of the country. Any discrimination against a particular branch, for the purpose of benefitting favored corporations, individuals, or interests, would have been unjust to the rest of the community, and inconsistent with that spirit of fairness and equality which ought to govern in the adjustment of a revenue tariff.

But the squandering of the public money sinks into comparative insignificance as a temptation to corruption when compared with the squandering of the public lands.

No nation in the tide of time has ever been blessed with so rich and noble an inheritance as we enjoy in the public lands. In administering this important trust, whilst it may be wise to grant portions of them for the improvement of the remainder, yet we should never forget that it is our cardinal policy to reserve these lands, as much as may be, for actual settlers, and this at moderate prices. We shall thus not only best promote the prosperity of the new States and Territories by furnishing them a hardy and independent race of honest and industrious citizens, but shall secure homes for our children and our children's children, as well as for those exiles from foreign shores who may seek in this country to improve their condition, and to enjoy the blessings of civil and religious liberty. Such emigrants have done much to promote the growth and prosperity of the country. They have proved faithful both in peace and in war. After becoming citizens, they are entitled, under the Constitution and laws, to be placed on a perfect equality with native-born citizens, and in this character they should ever be kindly recognized.

The Federal Constitution is a grant from the States to Congress of certain specific powers; and the question whether this grant should be liberally or strictly construed, has, more or less, divided political parties from the beginning. Without entering into the argument, I desire to state, at the commencement of my administration, that long experience and observation have convinced me that a strict construction of the powers of the Government is the only true, as well as the only safe, theory of the Constitution. Whenever, in our past history, doubtful powers have been exercised by Congress, these have never failed to produce injurious and unhappy consequences. Many such instances might be adduced, if this were the proper occasion. Neither is it necessary for the public service to strain the language of the Constitution; because all the great and useful powers required for a successful administration of the Government, both in peace and in war, have been granted, either in express terms or by the plainest implication.

Whilst deeply convinced of these truths, I yet consider it clear that, under the war-making power, Congress may appropriate money towards the construction of a military road, when this is absolutely necessary for the defence of any State or Territory of the Union against foreign invasion. Under the Constitution, Congress has power "to declare war," "to raise and support armies," "to provide and maintain a navy," and to call forth the militia to "repel invasions." Thus endowed, in an ample manner, with the war-making power, the corresponding duty is required that "the United States shall protect each of them [the States] against invasion." Now, how is it possible to afford this protection to California and our Pacific possessions, except by means of a military road through the Territories of the United States, over which men and munitions of war may be speedily transported from the Atlantic States to meet and to repel the invader? In the event of a war with a naval power much stronger than our own, we should then have no other available access to the Pacific coast, because such a power would instantly close the route across the isthmus of Central America. It is impossible to conceive that, whilst the Constitution has expressly required Congress to defend all the States, it should yet deny to them, by any fair construction, the only possible means by which one of these States can be defended. Besides, the Government, ever since its origin, has been in the constant practice of constructing military roads. It might also be wise to consider whether the love for the Union which now animates our fellow-citizens on the Pacific coast may not be impaired by our neglect or refusal to provide for them, in their remote and isolated condition, the only means by which the power of the States, on this side of the Rocky Mountains, can reach them in sufficient time to "protect" them "against invasion." I forbear for the present from expressing an opinion as to the wisest and most economical mode in which the Government can lend its aid in accomplishing this great and necessary work. I believe that many of the difficulties in the way, which now appear formidable, will, in a great degree, vanish as soon as the nearest and best route shall have been satisfactorily ascertained.

It may be proper that, on this occasion, I should make some brief remarks in regard to our rights and duties as a member of the great family of nations. In our intercourse with them there are some plain principles, approved by our own experience, from which we should never depart. We ought to cultivate peace, commerce, and friendship with all nations; and this not merely as the best means of promoting our own material interests, but in a spirit of Christian benevolence towards our fellow-men, wherever their lot may be cast. Our diplomacy should be direct and frank, neither seeking to obtain more nor accepting less than is our due. We ought to cherish a sacred regard for the independence of all nations, and never attempt to interfere in the domestic concerns of any, unless this shall be imperatively required by the great laws of self-preservation. To avoid entangling alliances has been a maxim of our policy ever since the days of Washington, and its wisdom no one will attempt to dispute. In short, we ought to do justice, in a kindly spirit, to all nations, and require justice from them in return.

It is our glory that, whilst other nations have extended their dominions by the sword, we have never acquired any territory except by fair purchase, or, as in the case of Texas, by the voluntary determination of a brave, kindred, and independent people to blend their destinies with our own. Even our acquisitions from Mexico form no exception. Unwilling to take advantage of the fortune of war against a sister republic, we purchased these possessions, under the treaty of peace, for a sum which was considered at the time a fair equivalent. Our past history forbids that we shall in the future acquire territory, unless this be sanctioned by the laws of justice and honor. Acting on this principle, no nation will have a right to interfere or to complain if, in the progress of events, we shall still further extend our possessions. Hitherto, in all our acquisitions, the people, under the protection of the American flag, have enjoyed civil and religious liberty, as well as equal and just laws, and have been contented, prosperous, and happy. Their trade with the rest of the world has rapidly increased, and thus every commercial nation has shared largely in their successful progress.

I shall now proceed to take the oath prescribed by the Constitution, whilst humbly invoking the blessing of Divine Providence on this great people.

In the selection of his cabinet, the President followed the long-established custom of making it a representation of the different portions of the Union, so far as might be consistent with a proper regard for personal qualifications for the different posts. The cabinet, which was confirmed by the Senate on the 6th day of March, 1857, consisted of Lewis Cass, of Michigan, Secretary of State; Howell Cobb, of Georgia, Secretary of the Treasury; John B. Floyd, of Virginia, Secretary of War; Isaac Toucey, of Connecticut, Secretary of the Navy; Aaron

V. Brown, of Tennessee, Postmaster General; Jacob Thompson, of Mississippi, Secretary of the Interior; and Jeremiah S. Black, of Pennsylvania, Attorney General. So far as was practicable within the limits of a selection which, according to invariable usage and sound policy was confined to the Democratic party, this cabinet was a fair representation of the Eastern, the Middle, the Western and the Southern States.

The state of the country, however, when this administration was organized, was ominous to its internal peace and welfare. The preceding administration of President Pierce had left a legacy of trouble to his successor in the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. Had it not been for this ill-advised step, the country might have reposed upon the settlement of all the slavery questions that was made by the "Compromise Measures" of 1850. How the flood-gates of sectional controversy were again opened by the repeal of the earlier settlement of 1820, and how this repeal tended to unsettle what had been happily settled in 1850, is a sad chapter in our political history.

The repeal of the Missouri Compromise was effected in the following manner: In the session of 1854, Senator Douglas, chairman of the Senate Committee on Territories, reported a bill for the establishment of a Territorial government in Nebraska. It did not touch the Missouri Compromise; and, being in the usual form, it would probably have been passed without much opposition, but for the intervention of a Senator from Kentucky, Mr. Dixon. He gave notice, on the 16th of January, that when the bill should be reached in its order, he would move a section repealing the Missouri Compromise, both as to Nebraska and all other Territories of the United States. Mr. Dixon was a Whig, and Mr. Douglas was a prominent and most energetic Democrat, who had long been an aspirant to the Presidency. Conceiving the idea that a new doctrine respecting the sovereign right of the people of a Territory to determine for themselves whether they would or would not have slavery while they were in the Territorial condition, would better reconcile both sections of the Union than the continuance of the Missouri Compromise, he introduced a substitute for the original bill, which, after dividing Nebraska into two Territories, calling one Nebraska and the other Kansas, annulled the Mis-

souri Compromise in regard to these and all other Territories. This he called, "Non-intervention by Congress with slavery in the States or Territories," which his bill declared was the principle of the settlement of 1850, although that settlement had not only not invalidated the Missouri Compromise, but that Compromise had been expressly recognized in the case of Texas. Mr. Dixon expressed himself as perfectly satisfied with Mr. Douglas's new bill, and the latter, being a man of great power, both as a debater and as a politician, carried his bill through the two Houses, and persuaded President Pierce to approve it. It was long and disastrously known as "the Kansas-Nebraska Act."

Its discussion in Congress was attended with heats such as had not been witnessed for many years. It laid the foundation for the political success of the party then beginning to be known as the Republican, and it produced the hopeless disruption of the Democratic party when its nomination for the Presidency next after Mr. Buchanan's was to be made. Proud, disdainful of the predictions made by others of the danger to the Union arising from his measure, confident in his own energies and his ability to unite the Democratic party in the South and in the North upon his principle of "non-intervention," Mr. Douglas gained a momentary triumph at the expense of his own political future, of the future of his party, and of the peace of the Union. For a time, however, it seemed as if he had secured a following that would insure the acceptance of his principle. All the Southern Senators, Whigs and Democrats, with two exceptions,\* and all the Northern Democratic Senators, with three exceptions,† voted for his bill. The Whig Senators from the North, and those who more distinctively represented the Northern anti-slavery, or "Free-soil" sentiment, voted against it; but the latter hailed it as a means that would consolidate the North into a great political organization, with freedom inscribed upon its banners. Mr. Buchanan, it will be remembered, was at this time in England.

He has said that although down to this period the anti-slavery

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\* Mr. Bell, of Tennessee, and Mr. Clayton, of Delaware.

† Messrs. Allen and James, of Rhode Island, and Mr. Walker, of Wisconsin.

party of the North had been the assailing party and kept the people of the South in constant irritation, yet, "in sustaining the repeal of the Missouri Compromise the Senators and Representatives of the Southern States became the aggressors themselves."\* And it was one of the worst features of this aggression that it was made under the lead of a Northern Democrat; for if the repeal of the Missouri Compromise was a boon offered to the South, they could say that it was a boon offered from the North.†

The fatal effects of this measure were two-fold; first in unsettling what had been settled in 1850, and secondly in precipitating a struggle in Kansas as between the pro-slavery and the anti-slavery parties, which, although it was local, spread itself in opposite sympathies throughout the North and the South. The Compromise Measures of 1850 had settled every possible question in relation to slavery on which Congress could then or ever afterwards act.

Such was the general repose of the country upon these topics when President Pierce was inaugurated, that he congratulated the country upon the calm security now evinced by the public mind, and promised that it should receive no shock during his official term, if he could prevent it. But the shock came within two years, and it came because the repeal of the Missouri Compromise threw open again the whole question of slavery in the Territories, to remain an unending sectional controversy until it had divided one great national party, built up a new and sectional party, and finally rent the Union into a geographical array of section against section.

The more immediate and local effect remains to be described. Kansas at once became the theatre where the extreme men of both sections entered into a deadly conflict, the one party to make it a free, the other to make it a slaveholding Territory and State. Congress having abdicated its duty of fixing the character of the Territory by law, one way or the other, the beauty of Mr. Douglas's principle of "non-intervention," now become popularly known in the political jargon of the day as

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\* Buchanan's Defence, p. 28.

† It must be remembered that this took place long before the case of "Dred Scott" had been acted upon in the Supreme Court of the United States.

“squatter sovereignty,” had ample room for development. What one party could do, on this principle, the other could do. The Southern pro-slavery settler, or his sympathizer in the Southern State which he had left, could claim that his slaves were property in Kansas as much as in Missouri, or Tennessee, or Kentucky. The Northern anti-slavery settler, or his sympathizer in the Northern State from which he had come, could contend that slavery was local and confined to the States where it existed. Fierce war arose between the parties in their struggle for local supremacy; both parties were respectively upheld and supplied by their sympathizers in the near and in the distant States, North and South; scenes of bloodshed and rapine ensued; and the bitter fruits of opening a fine Territory to such a contest were reaped in an abundance that made sober men stand aghast at the spectacle.

It was when Mr. Buchanan entered upon the duties of the Presidency that this condition of things in Kansas came to its culmination. The pro-slavery party in the Territory, in general violent and lawless enough, in one respect kept themselves on the side of law. They sustained the Territorial government which had been organized under the Act of Congress, and obtained control of its legislature. The anti-slavery party repudiated this legislature, alleging, with some truth, that frauds and violence had been committed in the election.

To meet this wrong they committed another. They held a convention at Topeka, framed a State constitution, elected a governor and legislature to take the place of those who were governing the Territory under the organic law, and applied to Congress for admission into the Union. They had thus put themselves out of pale of law. Congress at the end of a violent struggle rejected the application for admission into the Union, under the Topeka constitution, and recognized the authority of the Territorial government. This took place in the session of Congress which terminated on the day before Mr. Buchanan's inauguration. As President of the United States, he had no alternative but to recognize and uphold the Territorial government. The fact that the legislature of that government was in the hands of the pro-slavery party, made the course which he

adopted seem as if he favored their pro-slavery designs, while, in truth, he had no object to subserve but to sustain, as he was officially obliged to sustain, the government which Congress had recognized as the lawful government of the Territory.

This government at once proceeded to call a convention, to assemble at Lecompton, and frame a State constitution. It was now the President's hope that the anti-slavery party would cease their opposition to the Territorial government, obey the laws, and elect delegates to the Lecompton convention in sufficient number to insure a free constitution. But for the ten months which followed from the 4th of March, 1857, to the first Monday in January, 1858, this party continued to adhere to their Topeka constitution, and to defy the Territorial government. In the meantime the peace had to be kept by troops of the United States to prevent open war between the two parties.

The President, soon after his inauguration, sent the Hon. Robert J. Walker to Kansas, as Territorial governor, in place of Governor Geary, who had resigned. Governor Walker was directed, if possible, to persuade the anti-slavery party to unite with their opponents in forming a State constitution, and to take care that the election of delegates to the convention should be conducted so as to express the true voice of the people on the question of slavery or freedom. The governor performed this duty with entire impartiality. The laws which provided for the election of delegates to the convention, and for the registration of voters, were just and equitable. The governor administered them fairly; he exhorted the whole body of registered electors to vote. Nevertheless, the party that adhered to the Topeka government and refused to recognize the Territorial legislature, stayed away from the polls. The consequence was that a large majority of pro-slavery delegates were elected to the convention which was alone authorized, under the principles which, in this country, recognize the sovereignty of the people, and require it to be exercised through the ballot-box, under the superintendence of the existing government, to form a constitution.

While these things were taking place in Kansas, in the summer of 1857, while a portion of the inhabitants were in a state



of rebellion against the only government that had any lawful authority ; while the friends of freedom were setting the example of disloyalty to the established authority of the Territory, and the friends of slavery were, in one respect, the law-abiding part of the community ; while the revolutionary Topeka legislature was in session, claiming to be the lawful legislature, and a turbulent and dangerous military leader was at the head of the anti-slavery party, in open opposition to the only lawful government of the Territory, presses and pulpits throughout the North teemed with denunciations of the new President, who had not allowed revolutionary violence to prevail over the law of the land. At length there came from the State of Connecticut a memorial to the President, signed by forty-three of its distinguished citizens, among them several eminent clergymen, imputing to him a violation of his official oath, and informing him that they prayed the Almighty to preserve him from the errors of his ways. To this he replied with spirit and with a clear exposition of the mistakes into which ignorant zeal in the cause of freedom had led those who thus addressed him. His reply, dated August 15, 1857, is worthy of being reproduced :

“ When I entered upon the duties of the Presidential office, on the fourth of March last, what was the condition of Kansas ? This Territory had been organized under the Act of Congress of 30th May, 1854, and the government in all its branches was in full operation. A governor, secretary of the Territory, chief justice, two associate justices, a marshal, and district attorney had been appointed by my predecessor, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, and were all engaged in discharging their respective duties. A code of laws had been enacted by the Territorial legislature, and the judiciary were employed in expounding and carrying these laws into effect. It is quite true that a controversy had previously arisen respecting the validity of the election of members of the Territorial legislature and of the laws passed by them ; but at the time I entered upon my official duties, Congress had recognized this legislature in different forms and by different enactments. The delegate elected to the House of Representatives, under a Territorial law, had just completed his term of service on the day previous to my inauguration. In fact, I found the government of Kansas as well established as that of any other Territory. Under these circumstances, what was my duty ? Was it not to sustain this government ? to protect it from the violence of lawless men, who were determined either to rule or ruin ? to prevent it from being

overturned by force? in the language of the Constitution, to 'take care that the laws be faithfully executed?' It was for this purpose, and this alone, that I ordered a military force to Kansas to act as a posse comitatus in aiding the civil magistrate to carry the laws into execution. The condition of the Territory at the time, which I need not portray, rendered this precaution absolutely necessary. In this state of affairs, would I not have been justly condemned had I left the marshal and other officers of a like character impotent to execute the process and judgments of courts of justice established by Congress, or by the Territorial legislature under its express authority, and thus have suffered the government itself to become an object of contempt in the eyes of the people? And yet this is what you designate as forcing 'the people of Kansas to obey laws not their own, nor of the United States'; and for doing which you have denounced me as having violated my solemn oath. I ask, what else could I have done, or ought I to have done? Would you have desired that I should abandon the Territorial government, sanctioned as it had been by Congress, to illegal violence, and thus renew the scenes of civil war and bloodshed which every patriot in the country had deplored? This would, indeed, have been to violate my oath of office, and to fix a damning blot on the character of my administration.

"I most cheerfully admit that the necessity for sending a military force to Kansas to aid in the execution of the civil law, reflects no credit upon the character of our country. But let the blame fall upon the heads of the guilty. Whence did this necessity arise? A portion of the people of Kansas, unwilling to trust to the ballot-box—the certain American remedy for the redress of all grievances—undertook to create an independent government for themselves. Had this attempt proved successful, it would of course have subverted the existing government, prescribed and recognized by Congress, and substituted a revolutionary government in its stead. This was a usurpation of the same character as it would be for a portion of the people of Connecticut to undertake to establish a separate government within its chartered limits for the purpose of redressing any grievance, real or imaginary, of which they might have complained against the legitimate State government. Such a principle, if carried into execution, would destroy all lawful authority and produce universal anarchy."

And again: "I thank you for the assurances that you will 'not refrain from the prayer that Almighty God will make my administration an example of justice and beneficence.' You can greatly aid me in arriving at this blessed consummation, by exerting your influence in allaying the existing sectional excitement on the subject of slavery, which has been productive of much evil and no good, and which, if it could succeed in attaining its object, would ruin the slave as well as his master. This would be a work of genuine philanthropy. Every day of my life I feel how inadequate I am to perform the duties of my high station without the continued support of Divine Providence, yet, placing my trust in Him and in Him alone, I entertain a good hope that He will enable me to do equal justice to all portions of the Union, and thus

render me an humble instrument in restoring peace and harmony among the people of the several States."

The condition of Kansas continued for some time longer to be disturbed by the revolutionary proceedings of the adherents of the Topeka constitution. The inhabitants of the city of Lawrence undertook to organize an insurrection throughout the Territory. This town had been mainly established by the abolition societies of the Eastern States. It had some respectable and well behaved citizens, but it was the headquarters of paid agitators, in the employment of certain anti-slavery organizations. It became necessary for Governor Walker to suppress this threatened insurrection. The military leader of the Free State party undertook, in July, to organize his party into volunteers, and to take the names of all who refused enrollment. The professed purpose of this organization was to protect the polls at an election in August of a new Topeka legislature. Many of the conservative citizens, who had hitherto acted with the Free State party, were subjected to personal outrages for refusing to be enrolled. To meet this revolutionary military organization, and to prevent the establishment of an insurrectionary government at Lawrence, the Territorial Governor had to retain in Kansas a large body of United States troops. The insurgent general and his military staff denied the authority of the Territorial laws, and counselled the people not to participate in the elections ordered under the authority of the Lecompton convention.\*

The Lecompton convention, which met for the second time on the 2d of September, and then proceeded to frame a State constitution, adjourned on the 7th of November. Although this constitution recognized slavery, the convention took steps to submit the question to the people of the Territory, in a free ballot, by all the white male inhabitants, before it should be sent to Congress for admission into the Union. It would have been more regular to have submitted the whole constitution to the people, although the organic Act did not require it; but on the question of slavery, which was the vital one, it can not be

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\* Governor Walker's despatches to the Secretary of State, July 15th, 20th and 27th, 1857.

pretended that the convention acted unfairly. The election was directed to be held on the 21st of December, (1857), and the ballots were to be "Constitution with Slavery," and "Constitution with no Slavery." Thus the opportunity was again presented for the people of the Territory to vote upon the question on which they were divided; and again the anti-slavery party, with the exception of a few hundred of the voters, abstained from voting. The result was that there were 6,226 votes in favor of the "Constitution with Slavery," and only 569 against it.

The Lecompton constitution provided for holding an election of State officers, a legislature and a member of Congress, on the first Monday of January, 1858. The President sent instructions to the Territorial governor which secured a peaceable election. A larger vote was polled than at any previous election. The party which had previously refused to vote, now changed their tactics. They elected a large majority of the members of the legislature, and the political power of the proposed new State was therefore in their hands. But for their previous factional resistance to the authority of the Territorial government, they might have attained this result at a much earlier period.

On the 30th of January, 1858, the President received the so-called Lecompton constitution from the president of the convention, with a request that it be laid before Congress. And here it is necessary to pause, for the purpose of a just understanding of the grounds on which the President recommended the admission of Kansas with this constitution. He was assailed with almost every epithet of vituperation of which our language admits, as if he was responsible for and in favor of the pro-slavery feature of this constitution. A simple and truthful consideration of his official duty under the organic Act by which the Territory was organized, and a candid recital of the reasons on which he urged the admission of the State with this constitution, will enable my readers to determine with what justice he was treated in this matter.

Mr. Buchanan was elected President upon a political "platform," adopted by the Cincinnati Convention, which nominated him, and which, like all the platforms of that period, dealt, among other things, with the vexed subject of slavery in Terri-

tories. But the Cincinnati platform of the Democratic party did not affirm the right of a Territorial legislature to establish or to prohibit slavery: nor did it admit the doctrine of "popular sovereignty," as applied to a people while in the Territorial condition. What it did affirm was, that at the period when the people of a Territory should be forming and adopting a State constitution, they should be allowed to sanction or exclude slavery as they should see fit. This distinction has of course no interest at the present day. But in the condition of the Union in the year 1856, this distinction was of great practical importance. The political men who framed the Cincinnati platform had to consider how they could present to the people of the United States a principle of action on this exciting topic of slavery in the Territories, that would be consistent with the rights of slave-holding and non-slaveholding States in the common property of the Union, and at the same time affirm as a party doctrine a basis of proceeding that could be safely applied in any Territory and that would maintain its true relation as a Territory to the Government of the United States. If they were in pursuit of votes for their candidate, it should also be remembered that they were preparing for a great national party a set of political principles that would live and be active for a long time to come. Mr. Douglas had caused the Missouri Compromise to be swept away; he had procured the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which had affirmed something that was both new and strange in the politics of this difficult subject. This was, that in creating the body politic known as a Territory of the United States, Congress should neither legalize nor prohibit slavery while the Territorial condition continued, but that the same species of "popular sovereignty" should be held to be inherent in the people of a Territory that is inherent in the people of a State, so that they could act on the subject of slavery for themselves from the time of their first entry into the Territory and before they had been authorized to form themselves into a State. The *ad captandum* phrase "popular sovereignty" procured for this theory many adherents. But it was irreconcilable with what others asserted to be the true relation of a Territory to the Congress of the United States, and equally irreconcilable with the claim of the Southern slaveholder to go

into a Territory with his property in slaves and to maintain there that property until the State constitution had sanctioned or prohibited it. The framers of the Cincinnati platform did not propose to elect a President on this basis. They therefore did not affirm that a Territorial legislature, or the people of a Territory, should be allowed to act on the subject of slavery in any way; but they proclaimed as their doctrine that when the people of a Territory, acting under the authority of an organic law, should frame and adopt a State constitution, they should be at liberty to make their State free or slave as they might see fit.

Before this period the Cincinnati platform was silent; and it was silent because its framers did not see fit to trammel themselves or their candidate with a doctrine of "popular sovereignty" irreconcilable with the governing authority of Congress, and also because in this matter of slavery there was a question of property involved. When, therefore, Mr. Buchanan accepted the Cincinnati platform, and was elected upon it, he went into the office of President without being in any way committed to the doctrine of "popular sovereignty," as expounded by Mr. Douglas.

But the Kansas-Nebraska Act was both a bone of contention between two portions of the Democratic party and a law of the land. As President, Mr. Buchanan had only to construe and administer it. It contained, as explanatory of the purpose of Congress in abolishing the Missouri Compromise restriction, the following declaration: "It being the true intent and meaning of this Act not to legislate slavery into any Territory or State, nor to exclude it therefrom, but to leave the people thereof perfectly free to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States." This was in one respect ambiguous, and in another not so. It was ambiguous in not clearly defining the time at which this right to form their own domestic institutions was to be considered as inhering in the people of a Territory. It was unambiguous in subordinating the exercise of this right to the Constitution of the United States. In carrying out the law, the President had to consider what was the limitation imposed by the Constitution of the United States upon the operation of this newly created right. This brought before him

the action of the Supreme Court of the United States on the subject of slave property in the Territories, which had occurred a few days after his inauguration.

Whatever may be said of the action of the Supreme Court in the well-known case of "Dred Scott," in regard to its being technically a judicial decision, there can be no doubt as to what a majority of the judges meant to affirm and did affirm in their respective opinions.\* This was that property in slaves, being recognized as a right of property by the Constitution of the United States, although established only by the local law of a particular State, travelled with the person of the owner into a Territory; and while the Territorial condition continued, such property could not be abolished by the legislation of Congress or the legislation of the Territorial government. Mr. Buchanan always regarded this as a judicial decision of this question of property; and as the construction of the Kansas-Nebraska Act was by its express terms to be determined by the court, he considered it his duty to regard the period of time on which the people of Kansas were to decide the question of slavery or no slavery to be at the formation and adoption of a State constitution. This was the clear deduction to be drawn from the constitutional doctrine which had been enunciated by a majority of the judges.

Hence it was that all his official influence was exerted, through the Territorial government, to induce the people of Kansas to act on the question of slavery at the proper time and in the only practical way: namely, by voting for delegates to the convention called under the authority of the Territorial laws, and then voting on the constitution which that convention should frame. It certainly was no wish of his to have Kansas become a slaveholding State; he could have no motive in the whole matter but to get it decided what her domestic condition was to be, by the ballot-box instead of the rifle, by voting and not by fighting. He could, by no sort of justice, be held responsible for the result which was produced by the refusal of the

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\* I have more than once publicly expressed my belief that there was, technically speaking, no judicial decision in that case. But others, among them President Buchanan, always regarded it as a "decision."

anti-slavery party to vote ; and when the Lecompton constitution reached him, he could not avoid submitting it to Congress. He submitted it with a strong recommendation that Kansas be received into the Union under it. His reasons for this recommendation are now to be stated.

1. The Lecompton constitution was republican in form, and it had been framed and voted upon in a free and open ballot, which the convention had directed to be taken on the all-important question of slavery. 2. The question of slavery was thus localized, confined to the people whom it immediately concerned, and banished from the halls of Congress, where it had been always exerting a baneful influence upon the country at large. 3. If Congress, for the sake of those who had refused to exercise their power of excluding slavery from the constitution of Kansas, should now reject it because slavery remained in it, the agitation would be renewed everywhere in a more alarming form than it had yet assumed. 4. After the admission of the State, its people would be sovereign over this and every other domestic question ; they could mould their institutions as they should see fit, and if, as the President had every reason to believe, a majority of the people were opposed to slavery, the legislature already elected under this constitution could at once provide for amending it in the proper manner. 5. If this constitution should be sent back by Congress because it sanctioned slavery, a second constitution would have to be framed and sent to Congress, and there would be a revival of the slavery agitation, both in Congress and throughout the Union. 6. The speedy admission of Kansas, which would restore peace and harmony to the whole country, was of infinitely greater consequence than the small difference of time that would be required for the people to exercise their own sovereign power over the whole subject after they had become a State, compared with the process of a new convention to be held under the auspices of the Territorial government.\*

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\* See the President's message of February 23, 1858, submitting the Lecompton constitution. In describing the President's views on this subject. I have not only relied upon his messages and other official papers, but I have drawn them also from an elaborate private paper in his hand-writing, which is of too great length to be inserted textually in this work. It relates to the construction of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, a construction which he felt bound



"This message," says Mr. Buchanan, "gave rise to a long, exciting, and occasionally violent debate in both Houses of Congress, between the anti-slavery members and their opponents, which lasted for three months. In the course of it, slavery was denounced in every form which could exasperate the Southern people, and render it odious to the people of the North; whilst on the other hand, many of the speeches of Southern members displayed characteristic violence. Thus two sessions of Congress in succession had been in a great degree occupied with the same inflammatory topics, in discussing the affairs of Kansas."\* At length, however, an Act which had been reported by a committee of conference of both Houses, admitting Kansas into the Union as a State under the Lecompton constitution, was passed in the Senate by a vote of 31 to 22, and in the House by a vote of 112 to 103, and was signed by the President on the 4th of May, 1858.† The validity of the proceedings in Kansas which had produced the Lecompton constitution was expressly admitted by the preamble of this statute.

But the Act annexed a condition precedent to the final admission of the State under this constitution. This related, not to slavery, but to the public lands within the territory. The ordinance of the convention which accompanied the Lecompton constitution demanded for the State a cession of the public lands more than six times the quantity that had ever been granted to any other State, when received into the Union. Congress would not assent to such an exaction. It was therefore provided that the people of the State should vote upon a proposition reducing the number of acres to be ceded to the same number that had been granted to other States; and that when this proposition should have been ascertained by the President's proclamation to have been accepted, the admission of the State, upon an equal footing with all the other States, should be complete and

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to adopt in consequence of the views taken of the subject of slavery in Territories by the Supreme Court, as he said in his inaugural address that he should do. In this Mss., he speaks of "The infamous and unfounded assertion of Mr. —, that in a conversation with Chief Justice Taney, he [the Chief Justice] had informed him in advance of the inaugural what the opinion [of the court] would be."

\* Buchanan's Defence, p. 45.

† II U. S. Laws, p. 269. In the Senate, Mr. Douglas voted with the minority, as did a few anti-Lecompton Democrats in the House. [*Congressional Globe*, 1857-8, pp. 1899, 1865.] The Act was carried by a party vote.

absolute. But the condition was never fulfilled. The people of Kansas rejected it on the 2d of August, 1858, and the Lecompton constitution thus fell to the ground. "Notwithstanding this," Mr. Buchanan observes, "the recognition by Congress of the regularity of the proceedings in forming the Lecompton constitution, did much good, at least for a season. It diverted the attention of the people from fighting to voting, a most salutary change."\*

In his next annual message, of December 6, 1858, the President said :

When we compare the condition of the country at the present day with what it was one year ago, at the meeting of Congress, we have much reason for gratitude to that Almighty Providence which has never failed to interpose for our relief at the most critical periods of our history. One year ago the sectional strife between the North and the South on the dangerous subject of slavery had again become so intense as to threaten the peace and perpetuity of the confederacy. The application for the admission of Kansas as a State into the Union fostered this unhappy agitation, and brought the whole subject once more before Congress. It was the desire of every patriot that such measures of legislation might be adopted as would remove the excitement from the States and confine it to the Territory where it legitimately belonged. Much has been done, I am happy to say, towards the accomplishment of this object during the last session of Congress.

The Supreme Court of the United States had previously decided that all American citizens have an equal right to take into the Territories whatever is held as property under the laws of any of the States, and to hold such property there under the guardianship of the Federal Constitution, so long as the Territorial condition shall remain. This is now a well-established position, and the proceedings of the last session were alone wanting to give it practical effect.

The principle has been recognized, in some form or other, by an almost unanimous vote of both Houses of Congress, that a Territory has a right to come into the Union either as a free or a slave State, according to the will of a majority of its people. The just equality of all the States has thus been vindicated, and a fruitful source of dangerous dissension among them has been removed.

While such has been the beneficial tendency of your legislative proceedings outside of Kansas, their influence has nowhere been so happy as within that Territory itself. Left to manage and control its own affairs in its own way, without the pressure of external influence, the revolutionary Topeka

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\* Buchanan's Defence, p. 46.

organization, and all resistance to the Territorial government established by Congress, have been finally abandoned. As a natural consequence, that fine Territory now appears to be tranquil and prosperous, and is attracting increasing thousands of immigrants to make it their happy home.

The past unfortunate experience of Kansas has enforced the lesson, so often already taught, that resistance to lawful authority, under our form of government, cannot fail in the end to prove disastrous to its authors.

The people of Kansas, from this time forward, "left to manage their own affairs in their own way, without the presence of external influence," found that they could decide this question of slavery by their own votes, and that the stimulus and the materials for fighting, which had been supplied to them from the Northern or the Southern States, were poor means in comparison with the ballot-box. The anti-slavery party were numerically the strongest; and having now given up all factious resistance to the Territorial government, they were able, under its auspices, to establish a free constitution, under which the State was admitted into the Union on the 29th of January, 1861. But the effect of this struggle, precipitated by the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, and carried on for a period of seven years, was most disastrous to the peace and harmony of the Union. It fixed the attention of both sections of the Union upon a subject of the most inflammatory nature. On the one hand, the Democratic party, which extended throughout all the States, slaveholding and non-slaveholding, and which had elected Mr. Buchanan by the votes of both free and slave States, no longer had a common bond of party union in a common principle of action on the question of slavery in Territories. A portion of the party, under the lead of Mr. Douglas, and known as "the Northern Democracy," rejected the doctrine enunciated by the Judges of the Supreme Court, and still adhered to their principle of "popular sovereignty." The residue of the party, calling themselves "the Old Democracy," adhered to what they regarded as the decision of the court, maintained that the time for the people of a Territory to act on the subject of slavery was when forming and adopting a State constitution, and that in the previous period, the equal right of all the States in the common property of the Union could be

respected only by confining the power of the people of a Territory to the time of adopting a constitution. On the other hand, the new party, to which these events had given birth, and into which were now consolidating all the elements of the anti-slavery feeling of the free States, rejected entirely the principle enunciated by a majority of the Supreme Court, maintained that the Southern slave-holder could have no right to hold as property in a Territory that which was property at all only under the local law of a slave-holding State, and proclaimed that Congress must, by positive statute, annul any such supposed right in regard to all existing and all future Territories. If these conflicting sectional feelings and interests could have been confined to the practical question of what was to be done in the Territories before they should become States, there might have been less danger resulting from their agitation. In the nature of things, however, they could not be so confined. They brought into renewed discussion the whole subject of slavery everywhere, until the North and the South became involved in a struggle for the Presidency that was made to turn almost exclusively upon this one topic. But how this came about, and how it resulted in an attempted disruption of the Union, must be related hereafter.

## CHAPTER X.

1857—1861.

FOREIGN RELATIONS DURING MR. BUCHANAN'S ADMINISTRATION.

THE internal affairs of the country during the administration of Mr. Buchanan occupied so much of the public attention at the time, and have since been a subject of so much interest, that his management of our foreign relations has been quite obscured. Before I approach the troubled period which witnessed the beginning of the Southern revolt, I shall describe, with as much brevity as I can use, whatever is most important in the relations of the United States with other countries, that transpired during his Presidency.

It will be seen, hereafter, from what he recorded in his private papers at the time of the resignation of General Cass from the State Department, in the latter part of the year 1860, that Mr. Buchanan had to be virtually his own Secretary of State, until Judge Black succeeded to that office. This was less irksome to him than it might have been to other Presidents, because of his great familiarity with the diplomatic history of the country, and his experience in the diplomatic service. His strong personal regard for General Cass, whose high character, as well as his political standing in the party of which they were both members, and the demand of the Western States, had been the reasons for offering to him the Department of State, made Mr. Buchanan patient and kind towards one who did not render him much aid in the business of that office. Mr. Buchanan, too, was a man who never shrank from labor. His industry was incessant and untiring; it did not flag with his advancing years; and it was an industry applied, in foreign affairs, to matters of which he had a fuller and more intimate knowledge than any American statesman of his time who was living when he became President of the United States. His private papers bear ample testimony to the minute and constant attention which he gave to the foreign relations of the country,

and to the extent of his employment of his own pen. He wrote with great facility, precision and clearness, from a mind stored with historical information and the principles of public law. There was no topic and no question in the foreign relations of the United States on which his knowledge did not come readily and promptly to his hand. In this respect, with the exception of Mr. Jefferson and Mr. John Quincy Adams, we have as yet had no President who was his superior, or his equal. Like them, he had passed through the office of Secretary of State, as well as through very important foreign missions; an advantage which always tells in the office of President, when it is combined with the qualifications that are peculiar to American statesmanship.

First in importance, if not in dignity, the relations of the United States with England, at any period of our history, and the mode in which they were handled, are topics of permanent interest. How often these two kindred nations have been on the verge of war, and how that peril has been encountered and averted cannot cease to be instructive. Nor is it of less consequence to note the course of a President, who, during an administration fraught with the most serious hazards to the internal relations of the United States with each other, kept steadily in view the preservation of peace and good will between the United States and Great Britain, while he abated nothing from our just claims or our national dignity. Mr. Buchanan left to his successor no unsettled question between these two nations, that was of any immediate importance, and he left the feeling between them and their respective governments in a far better condition than he found it on his accession to the Presidency, and in a totally different state from that which ensued after the beginning of our civil war.

But when he became President, two irritating and dangerous questions were pending, inherited from former administrations. The first of these related, as we have seen, to the British claim of a protectorate over the Mosquito coast, and to the establishment of colonial government over the Bay Islands; territories that belonged respectively to the feeble republics of Nicaragua and Honduras. It has been seen in a former chapter how the ambiguity of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty had led the British government to adopt a construction of it which would support

these claims, and which would justify the pretension that by that treaty the United States had receded from what was called the "Monroe Doctrine." This treaty, concluded in 1850 by the administration of General Taylor, was supposed in this country to have settled these questions in favor of the United States, and that Great Britain would withdraw from the territories of Nicaragua and Honduras. But she did not withdraw. Her ministers continued to claim that the treaty only restrained her from making future acquisitions in Central America, and that the true inference from this was that she could hold her existing possessions. It was, as has been seen, in the hope of settling this question, that Mr. Buchanan accepted the mission to England in 1853. Why it was not settled at that time, has been already stated in detail. It remained to be amicably and honorably settled, under his advice and approbation, after he became President, by treaties between Great Britain and the two Central American States, in accordance with the American construction of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty.

The long standing question in regard to the right of search came into the hands of President Buchanan at a moment and under circumstances that required the most vigorous action. The belligerent right of search, exercised by Great Britain in the maritime wars of 1812, had been a cause of constant irritation to the people of this country. In progress of time, England undertook to assert a right to detain and search merchantmen on the high seas, in time of peace, suspected of being engaged in the slave trade. There was no analogy, even, in this to the belligerent right of visitation and search, whatever the latter might comprehend. An accommodation, rather than a settlement, of this claim was made in the treaty of 1842, negotiated between Lord Ashburton and Mr. Webster, by which each nation agreed to keep a squadron of its own on the coast of Africa, for the suppression of the slave trade when carried on under their respective flags, or under any claim or use of their flags, or by their subjects or citizens respectively. Although this stipulation was accompanied by a very forcible declaration made by Mr. Webster, under the direction of President Tyler, that the American Government admitted of no right of visitation and search of merchant vessels in time of peace, England did not wholly abandon or re-

nounce her claim of a right to detain and search all vessels on the high seas which the commanders of her cruisers might suspect to be slave traders. In the spring of 1858, a number of small cruisers which had been employed in the Crimean war was despatched by the British government to the coast of Cuba and the Gulf of Mexico, with orders to search all merchantmen suspected to be engaged in the slave trade. The presence of these cruisers, acting under such orders, in waters traversed in all directions by American vessels engaged in the foreign and coastwise trade, became most alarming. Nor was the alarm lessened by the manner in which the orders were carried out. Many American vessels were stopped and searched rudely and offensively. A loud call was made upon the President to interfere. A general indignation broke forth in all quarters of the Union. President Buchanan, always vigilant in protecting the commerce of the country, but mindful of the importance of preventing any necessity for war, remonstrated to the English government against this violation of the freedom of the seas.

Still, the occasion required, in the opinion of the President, that remonstrance should be backed by force. Great Britain had thought proper, without warning, to send a force into waters filled with American commerce, with orders to do what she had not the smallest right to do. It was a very aggressive proceeding to be taken against the commerce of a nation that had always denied the alleged right of search as a right to be exercised in time of peace for any purpose whatever. A very large naval force was at once despatched to the neighborhood of Cuba, by order of the President, with instructions "to protect all vessels of the United States on the high seas from search or detention by the vessels of war of any other nation." Any one of the cruisers sent on this mission could have resisted a ship of the largest class. The effect was most salutary. The British government receded, recalled their orders, abandoned the claim of the right of search, and recognized the principle of international law in favor of the freedom of the seas. This was the end of a long controversy between the two governments.\*

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\* The Senate, although at a late period, unanimously approved of the instructions given to the Secretary of the Navy, and by him carried out. (See *Congressional Globe*, 1858-9, p. 3661; Senate Documents, vol. IV, p. 3, Report of the Secretary of the Navy.)



During the whole of Mr. Buchanan's administration our relations with Mexico were in a complicated and critical position, in consequence of the internal condition of that country and of the danger of interference by European powers. Mr. Buchanan has himself concisely and accurately described the state of things in Mexico at the time of his accession to the Presidency, and down to the end of the year 1859, and I therefore quote his description, rather than make one of my own :

That republic has been in a state of constant revolution ever since it achieved its independence from Spain. The various constitutions adopted from time to time had been set at naught almost as soon as proclaimed; and one military leader after another, in rapid succession, had usurped the government. This fine country, blessed with a benign climate, a fertile soil, and vast mineral resources, was reduced by civil war and brigandage to a condition of almost hopeless anarchy. Meanwhile, our treaties with the republic were incessantly violated. Our citizens were imprisoned, expelled from the country, and in some instances murdered. Their vessels, merchandise, and other property were seized and confiscated. While the central government at the capital were acting in this manner, such was the general lawlessness prevailing, that different parties claiming and exercising local authority in several districts were committing similar outrages on our citizens. Our treaties had become a dead letter, and our commerce with the republic was almost entirely destroyed. The claims of American citizens filed in the State Department, for which they asked the interposition of their own Government with that of Mexico to obtain redress and indemnity, exceeded \$10,000,000. Although this amount may have been exaggerated by the claimants, still their actual losses must have been very large.\*

In all these cases as they occurred our successive ministers demanded redress, but their demands were only followed by new injuries. Their testimony was uniform and emphatic in reference to the only remedy which in their judgments would prove effectual. "Nothing but a manifestation of the power of the Government of the United States," wrote Mr. John Forsyth, our minister in 1856, "and of its purpose to punish these wrongs will avail. I assure you that the universal belief here is, that there is nothing to be apprehended from the Government of the United States, and that local Mexican officials can commit these outrages upon American citizens with absolute impunity."

In the year 1857 a favorable change occurred in the affairs of the republic, inspiring better hopes for the future. A constituent congress, elected by the people of the different States for this purpose, had framed and adopted a

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\* List of Claims, Senate Executive Documents, p. 13, 2d session 35th Congress, President's Message.

republican constitution. It adjourned on the 17th February, 1857, having provided for a popular election to be held in July for a president and members of congress. At this election General Comonfort was chosen president almost without opposition. His term of office was to commence on the 1st of December, 1857, and to continue for four years. In case his office should become vacant, the constitution had provided that the chief justice of Mexico, then General Juarez, should become president, until the end of the term. On the 1st December, 1857, General Comonfort appeared before the congress then in session, took the oath to support the constitution, and was duly inaugurated.

But the hopes thus inspired for the establishment of a regular constitutional government soon proved delusive. President Comonfort, within one brief month, was driven from the capital and the republic by a military rebellion headed by General Zuloaga; and General Juarez consequently became the constitutional president of Mexico until the 1st day of December, 1861. General Zuloaga instantly assumed the name of president with indefinite powers; and the entire diplomatic corps, including the minister from the United States, made haste to recognize the authority of the usurper without awaiting instructions from their respective governments. But Zuloaga was speedily expelled from power. Having encountered the resistance of the people in many parts of the republic, and a large portion of the capital having "pronounced" against him, he was in turn compelled to relinquish the presidency. The field was now cleared for the elevation of General Miramon. He had from the beginning been the favorite of the so-called "Church party," and was ready to become their willing instrument in maintaining the vast estates and prerogatives of the Church, and in suppressing the Liberal constitution. An assembly of his partisans, called together without even the semblance of authority, elected him president, but he warily refused to accept the office at their hands. He then resorted to another but scarcely more plausible expedient to place himself in power. This was to identify himself with General Zuloaga, who had just been deposed, and to bring him again upon the stage as president. Zuloaga accordingly reappeared in this character, but his only act was to appoint Miramon "president substitute," when he again retired. It is under this title that Miramon has since exercised military authority in the city of Mexico, expecting by this stratagem to appropriate to himself the recognition of the foreign ministers which had been granted to Zuloaga. He succeeded. The ministers continued their relations with him as "president substitute" in the same manner as if Zuloaga had still remained in power. It was by this farce, for it deserves no better name, that Miramon succeeded in grasping the presidency. The idea that the chief of a nation at his own discretion may transfer to whomsoever he please the trust of governing, delegated to him for the benefit of the people, is too absurd to receive a moment's countenance. But when we reflect that Zuloaga, from whom Miramon derived his title, was himself a military usurper, having expelled the constitutional president (Comonfort) from office, it would have been a lasting disgrace to the

Mexican people had they tamely submitted to the yoke. To such an imputation a large majority proved themselves not to be justly exposed. Although, on former occasions, a seizure of the capital and the usurpation of power by a military chieftain had been generally followed, at least for a brief season, by an acquiescence of the Mexican people, yet they now rose boldly and independently to defend their rights.

President Juarez, after having been driven from the city of Mexico by Zuloaga, proceeded to form a constitutional government at Guanajuato. From thence he removed to Vera Cruz, where he put his administration in successful operation. The people in many portions of the republic rallied in its support and flew to arms. A civil war thus began between the friends of the constitution and the partisans of Miramon. In this conflict it was not possible for the American people to remain indifferent spectators. They naturally favored the cause of President Juarez, and expressed ardent wishes for his success. Meanwhile Mr. Forsyth, the American minister, still continued at the city of Mexico in the discharge of his official duties until June, 1858, when he suspended his diplomatic relations with the Miramon government, until he should ascertain the decision of the President. Its outrages towards American citizens and its personal indignities towards himself, without hope of amendment or redress, rendered his condition no longer tolerable. Our relations, bad as they had been under former governments, had now become still worse under that of Miramon. President Buchanan approved the step which Mr. Forsyth had taken. He was consequently directed to demand his passports, to deposit the archives of the legation with Mr. Black, our consul at the city of Mexico, and to proceed to Vera Cruz, where an armed steamer would be in readiness to convey himself and family to the United States.\*

Thus was all diplomatic intercourse finally terminated with the government of Miramon, whilst none had been organized with that of Juarez. The President entertained some hope that this rupture of diplomatic relations might cause Miramon to reflect seriously on the danger of war with the United States, and might at least arrest future outrages on our citizens. Instead of this, however, he persisted in his course of violence against the few American citizens who had the courage to remain under his power. The President, in his message of December, 1859,<sup>†</sup> informs Congress that "murders of a still more atrocious character have been committed in the very heart of Mexico, under the authority of Miramon's government, during the present year. Some of these were worthy only of a barbarous age, and if they had not been clearly proven, would have seemed impossible in a country which claims to be civilized." And in that of December, 1860, he says: "To cap the climax, after the battle of Tacubaya, in April, 1859, General Marquez ordered three citizens of the United States, two of them physicians, to be seized in the

\* Letter of General Cass to Mr. Forsyth, July 15th, 1858. Senate Documents, 1858-1859, vol. i., p. 48

† House Journal, p. 207.

hospital at that place, taken out and shot, without crime, and without trial. This was done, notwithstanding our unfortunate countrymen were at the moment engaged in the holy cause of affording relief to the soldiers of both parties who had been wounded in the battle, without making any distinction between them."

"Little less shocking was the recent fate of Ormond Chase, who was shot in Tepic, on the 7th August, by order of the same Mexican general, not only without a trial, but without any conjecture by his friends of the cause of his arrest." He was represented to have been a young man of good character and intelligence, who had made numerous friends in Tepic, and his unexpected execution shocked the whole community. "Other outrages," the President states, "might be enumerated; but these are sufficient to illustrate the wretched state of the country and the unprotected condition of the persons and property of our citizens in Mexico."

"The wrongs which we have suffered from Mexico are before the world, and must deeply impress every American citizen. A government which is either unable or unwilling to redress such wrongs, is derelict to its highest duties."

Meanwhile, the civil war between the parties was conducted with various success, but the scale preponderated in favor of the constitutional cause. Ere long the government of Juarez extended its authority, and was acknowledged in all the important ports and throughout the sea-coasts and external territory of the republic; whilst the power of Miramon was confined to the city of Mexico and the surrounding States.

The final triumph of Juarez became so probable, that President Buchanan deemed it his duty to inquire and ascertain whether, according to our constant usage in such cases, he might not recognize the constitutional government. For the purpose of obtaining reliable information on this point, he sent a confidential agent to Mexico to examine and report the actual condition and prospects of the belligerents. In consequence of his report, as well as of intelligence from other sources, he felt justified in appointing a new minister to the Mexican republic. For this office Mr. Robert M. McLane, a distinguished citizen of Maryland, was selected. He proceeded on his mission on the 8th March, 1859, invested "with discretionary authority to recognize the government of President Juarez, if on his arrival in Mexico he should find it entitled to such recognition, according to the established practice of the United States." In consequence, on the 7th of April, Mr. McLane recognized the constitutional government by presenting his credentials to President Juarez, having no hesitation, as he said, "in pronouncing the government of Juarez to be the only existing government of the republic." He was cordially received by the authorities at Vera Cruz, who have ever since manifested the most friendly disposition toward the United States.

Unhappily, however, the constitutional government, though supported by a large majority, both of the people and of the several Mexican States, had not been able to expel Miramon from the capital. In the opinion of the President,

it had now become the imperative duty of Congress to act without further delay, and to enforce redress from the government of Miramon for the wrongs it had committed in violation of the faith of treaties against citizens of the United States.

Toward no other government would we have manifested so long and so patient a forbearance. This arose from our warm sympathies for a neighboring republic. The territory under the sway of Miramon around the capital was not accessible to our forces without passing through the States under the jurisdiction of the constitutional government. But this from the beginning had always manifested the warmest desire to cultivate the most friendly relations with our country. No doubt was therefore entertained that it would cheerfully grant us the right of passage. Moreover, it well knew that the expulsion of Miramon would result in the triumph of the constitutional government and its establishment over the whole territory of Mexico. What was, also, deemed of great importance by the President, this would remove from us the danger of a foreign war in support of the Monroe doctrine against any European nation which might be tempted, by the distracted condition of the republic, to interfere forcibly in its internal affairs under the pretext of restoring peace and order.\*

It is now necessary to trace the President's policy in regard to these Mexican affairs, for the remainder of his term after the commencement of the session of Congress in December, 1859. He saw very clearly that unless active measures should be taken by the Government of the United States to reach a power with which a settlement of all claims and difficulties could be effected, some other nation would undertake to establish a government in Mexico, and the United States would then have to interfere, not only to secure the rights of their citizens, but to assert the principle of the "Monroe Doctrine," which, according to the long standing American claim, opposes European establishments upon any part of this continent. He had his eye especially at this time upon the Emperor of the French, whose colonizing policy for France was well known, and who, Mr. Buchanan was well informed, was exercising, through his minister, great influence over Miramon. It was morally certain that if our Congress did not give the President the means necessary either to uphold the constitutional government of Juarez, or to compel the government of Miramon to do justice to our citizens, he would be involved in the necessity for counteracting the designs of Louis

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\* Buchanan's Defence, p. 267 *et seq.*

Napoleon. If this would be an interference with the internal affairs of a foreign nation, contrary to our long avowed policy, was not this an exceptional case? Mexico was our neighbor, with whom our social, commercial and political relations were very close. She had no settled government. Without the friendly aid of some external power, she could have no government that could preserve her internal peace, or fulfill her treaty obligations. She was, as Mr. Buchanan forcibly said, "a wreck upon the ocean, drifting about as she is impelled by different factions." What power could more safely and appropriately undertake to assist her in establishing a settled government than the great neighboring Republic of the United States, whose people and rulers could have no desire to see her depart from the principles of constitutional and republican institutions? And if the United States had wrongs of their own citizens for which to seek redress and indemnification from the Mexican nation, was that a reason for refusing to do whatever might appropriately be done towards assisting any government which the Mexican people might be disposed to support and acknowledge, to acquire the position and authority of a legitimate representative of the nation? It seemed to President Buchanan that there were but two alternatives: either to march a force into Mexico which would be sufficient to enable the constitutional government to reach the capital and extend its power over the whole republic, or to let things drift in uncertainty until Louis Napoleon should interfere. If the United States would act in concert with the constitutional government, the President believed that their consent and co-operation could be obtained. If the United States did nothing, the French would enter the country and the whole condition of affairs would become more complicated than they had ever been.

Accordingly, the President, in his message to Congress, of December 19th, 1859, recommended the passage of a law, authorizing him, under such conditions as Congress might deem expedient, to employ a sufficient military force to enter Mexico for the purpose of obtaining indemnity for the past and security for the future. After explaining the necessity and expediency of this step, and pointing out in what manner this force could aid the constitutional government of Juarez, he said that

if this were not done, "it would not be surprising should some other nation undertake the task, and thus force us to interfere at last, under circumstances of increased difficulty, for the maintenance of our established policy." The entire session of 1859-60 passed away without any notice being taken in Congress of this recommendation. The attention of that body was absorbed in discussions about slavery, and in shaping the politics of the next Presidential election. If the President's recommendation about Mexico had been discussed, we might have been able to judge whether his political opponents were fearful that more territory would be acquired from Mexico, for the further extension of slavery. But in regard to any such result of the mode in which the President proposed to secure an indemnification of the claims of our citizens, it is to be observed that according to the terms of his recommendation, it would rest entirely with Congress to fix the preceding conditions of the intervention, and that if a treaty were to follow or precede, it would have to be ratified by the Senate.

The President again brought this subject before Congress by his annual message of December, 1860. Mr. Lincoln had now been elected President and the foreign relations of the country would in three months be in his hands. At this time, however, it had become still more necessary for the United States Government to determine, and to determine promptly, whether it would leave American citizens to the mercy of Miramon's government, or whether it would do something to establish the constitutional government of Juarez. Again the President repeated the warning that foreign powers would interfere if this matter were to be much longer neglected, although at that moment informal and verbal assurances had been given by some of the European diplomatists in Mexico that such interference was not intended. Congress, however, spent the whole winter of 1860-61 in a dreary discussion of our internal affairs, without either making any effort to arrest the spread of secession by conciliatory measures, or doing anything to strengthen the hands of the President or his successor.

But it had been for some time apparent to Mr. Buchanan that our relations with Mexico could not be left in the condition in which they stood. Both to satisfy the long deferred claims of

our citizens, and to prevent foreign interference with the internal affairs of Mexico, he had instructed Mr. McLane to make a treaty with the Constitutional government. On the 14th of December, 1859, a "Treaty of Transit and Commerce" was signed between the Mexican Republic and the United States, and also a "Convention to enforce treaty stipulations, and to maintain order and security in the territory of the Republics of Mexico and the United States." Great advantages of trade, transit and commerce were secured by these arrangements. The United States was to pay \$4,000,000 for the surrender of certain Mexican duties, two millions to be paid down, and two millions to be reserved and distributed to the American claimants who could prove their injuries. With the two millions to be placed in the hands of the constitutional government, it was expected that it would be able to expel the usurping government from the capital and establish itself over the whole territory of the republic. All acquisition of further Mexican territory was thus avoided. If this treaty had been approved by the Senate of the United States, the empire of Maximilian would never have been heard of. The American negotiator, Mr. McLane, in his despatch to the Secretary of State, dated on the day this treaty and convention were signed at Vera Cruz, expressed his apprehension that if they were not ratified, further anarchy would prevail in Mexico, until it should be ended by interference from some other quarter. The President submitted the treaty and the convention to the Senate on the 24th of January, 1860. They were neither of them approved. Mexico was left to the interference of Louis Napoleon; the establishment of an empire, under Maximilian, a prince of the House of Hapsburg, followed, for the embarrassment of President Lincoln's administration while we were in the throes of our civil war, and the claims of American citizens were to all appearance indefinitely postponed.

The relations of the United States with Spain at the commencement of Mr. Buchanan's administration, and the manner in which he dealt with them, have been described by him as follows :

Our relations with Spain were in a very unsatisfactory condition on his accession to power. Our flag had been insulted, and numerous injuries had



been inflicted on the persons and property of American citizens by Spanish officials acting under the direct control of the Captain General of Cuba. These gave rise to many but unavailing reclamations for redress and indemnity against the Spanish government. Our successive ministers at Madrid had for years ably presented and enforced these claims, but all without effect. Their efforts were continually baffled on different pretexts. There was a class of these claims called the "Cuban claims," of a nature so plainly just that they could not be gainsayed. In these more than one hundred of our citizens were directly interested. In 1844 duties were illegally exacted from their vessels at different custom houses in Cuba, and they appealed to the Government to have these duties refunded. Their amount could be easily ascertained by the Cuban officials themselves, who were in possession of all the necessary documents. The validity of these claims was eventually recognized by Spain, but not until after a delay of ten years. The amount due was fixed, according to her own statement, with which the claimants were satisfied, at the sum of \$128,635.54. Just at the moment when the claimants were expecting to receive this amount without further delay, the Spanish government proposed to pay, not the whole, but only one-third of it, and this provided we should accept it in full satisfaction of the entire claim. They added that this offer was made, not in strict justice, but as a special favor.

Under these circumstances, the time had arrived when the President deemed it his duty to employ strong and vigorous remonstrances to bring all our claims against Spain to a satisfactory conclusion. In this he succeeded in a manner gratifying to himself, and it is believed to all the claimants, but unfortunately not to the Senate of the United States. A convention was concluded at Madrid on the 5th March, 1860, establishing a joint commission for the final adjudication and payment of all the claims of the respective parties. By this the validity and amount of the Cuban claims were expressly admitted, and their speedy payment was placed beyond question. The convention was transmitted to the Senate for their constitutional action on the 3d May, 1860, but on the 27th June they determined, greatly to the surprise of the President, and the disappointment of the claimants, that they would "not advise and consent" to its ratification.

The reason for this decision, because made in executive session, cannot be positively known. This, as stated and believed at the time, was because the convention had authorized the Spanish government to present its Amistad claim, like any other claim, before the Board of Commissioners for decision. This claim, it will be recollected, was for the payment to the Spanish owners of the value of certain slaves, for which the Spanish government held the United States to be responsible under the treaty with Spain of the 27th October, 1795. Such was the evidence in its favor, that three Presidents of the United States had recommended to Congress to make an appropriation for its payment, and a bill for this purpose had passed the Senate. The validity of the claim, it is proper to observe, was not recognized by the convention. In this respect it was placed on the same footing with all the other claims of

the parties, with the exception of the Cuban claims. All the Spanish government obtained for it was simply a hearing before the Board, and this could not be denied with any show of impartiality. Besides, it is quite certain that no convention could have been concluded without such a provision.

It was most probably the extreme views of the Senate at the time against slavery, and their reluctance to recognize it even so far as to permit a foreign claimant, although under the sanction of a treaty, to raise a question before the Board which might involve its existence, that caused the rejection of the convention. Under the impulse of such sentiments, the claims of our fellow-citizens have been postponed if not finally defeated. Indeed, the Cuban claimants, learning that the objections in the Senate arose from the Amistad claim, made a formal offer to remove the difficulty by deducting its amount from the sum due to them, but this of course could not be accepted.\*

The following account of an expedition which President Buchanan found it necessary to send to Paraguay, is also taken from his Defence of his Administration :

The hostile attitude of the government of Paraguay toward the United States early commanded the attention of the President. That government had, upon frivolous and even insulting pretexts, refused to ratify the treaty of friendship, commerce and navigation, concluded with it on the 4th March, 1853, as amended by the Senate, though this only in mere matters of form. It had seized and appropriated the property of American citizens residing in Paraguay, in a violent and arbitrary manner; and finally, by order of President Lopez, it had fired upon the United States steamer *Water Witch* (1st February, 1855), under Commander Thomas J. Page of the navy, and killed the sailor at the helm, whilst she was peacefully employed in surveying the Parana river, to ascertain its fitness for steam navigation. The honor, as well as the interests of the country, demanded satisfaction.

The President brought the subject to the notice of Congress in his first annual message (8th December, 1857). In this he informed them that he would make a demand for redress on the government of Paraguay, in a firm but conciliatory manner, but at the same time observed, that "this will the more probably be granted, if the Executive shall have authority to use other means in the event of a refusal. This is accordingly recommended." Congress responded favorably to this recommendation. On the 2d June, 1858,† they passed a joint resolution authorizing the President "to adopt such measures, and use such force as, in his judgment, may be necessary and advisable, in the event of a refusal of just satisfaction by the government of Paraguay, in connection with the attack on the United States steamer *Water Witch*, and

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\* Buchanan's Defence, pp. 253-260; written and published in 1865-'66.

† U. S. Statutes at Large, vol xi, p. 370.

with other matters referred to in the annual message."\* They also made an appropriation to defray the expenses of a commissioner to Paraguay, should he deem it proper to appoint one, "for the adjustment of difficulties" with that republic.

Paraguay is situated far in the interior of South America, and its capital, the city of Asuncion, on the left bank of the river Paraguay, is more than a thousand miles from the mouth of the La Plata.

The stern policy of Dr. Francia, formerly the Dictator of Paraguay, had been to exclude all the rest of the world from his dominions, and in this he had succeeded by the most severe and arbitrary measures. His successor, President Lopez, found it necessary, in some degree, to relax this jealous policy; but, animated by the same spirit, he imposed harsh restrictions in his intercourse with foreigners. Protected by his remote and secluded position, he but little apprehended that a navy from our far distant country could ascend the La Plata, the Parana, and the Paraguay, and reach his capital. This was doubtless the reason why he had ventured to place us at defiance. Under these circumstances, the President deemed it advisable to send with our commissioner to Paraguay, Hon. James B. Bowlin, a naval force sufficient to exact justice should negotiation fail.† This consisted of nineteen armed vessels, great and small, carrying two hundred guns and twenty-five hundred sailors and marines, all under the command of the veteran and gallant Shubrick. Soon after the arrival of the expedition at Montevideo, Commissioner Bowlin and Commodore Shubrick proceeded (30th December, 1858) to ascend the rivers to Asuncion in the steamer Fulton, accompanied by the Water Witch. Meanwhile the remaining vessels rendezvoused in the Parana, near Rosario, a position from which they could act promptly, in case of need.

The commissioner arrived at Asuncion on the 25th January, 1859, and left it on the 10th February. Within this brief period he had ably and successfully accomplished all the objects of his mission. In addition to ample apologies, he obtained from President Lopez the payment of \$10,000 for the family of the seaman (Chaney) who had been killed in the attack on the Water Witch, and also concluded satisfactory treaties of indemnity and of navigation and commerce with the Paraguayan government.‡ Thus the President was enabled to announce to Congress, in his annual message (December, 1859), that "all our difficulties with Paraguay had been satisfactorily adjusted."

Even in this brief summary it would be unjust to withhold from Secretary Toucey a commendation for the economy and efficiency he displayed in fitting out this expedition.§ It is a remarkable fact in our history, that its entire expenses were defrayed out of the ordinary appropriations for the naval service. Not a dollar was appropriated by Congress for this purpose,

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\* U. S. Statutes at Large, vol. xi, p. 319.

† Message, 19th Dec. 1859.

‡ United States Pamphlet Laws, 1859-60, p. 119, appendix.

§ Report of Secretary Toucey, 2d Dec., 1859; Sen. Doc., 1859-60, vol. iii, p. 1137.

unless we may except the sum of \$289,000 for the purchase of seven small steamers of light draft, worth more than their cost, and which were afterwards usefully employed in the ordinary naval service.

It may be remarked that the President, in his message already referred to, justly observes, "that the appearance of so large a force, fitted out in such a prompt manner, in the far distant waters of the La Plata, and the admirable conduct of the officers and men employed in it, have had a happy effect in favor of our country throughout all that remote portion of the world."

The relations between the United States and China had been governed for twelve years by the treaty made in 1844, by Mr. Caleb Cushing, under the instructions of Mr. Webster as Secretary of State. This treaty had provided for its own amendment at the expiration of twelve years from its date, and it devolved on Mr. Buchanan's administration to institute the negotiations for this purpose. His own account of these negotiations, although greatly condensed, is all that need be here given :

The same success attended our negotiations with China.\* The treaty of July, 1844, with that empire, had provided for its own revision and amendment at the expiration of twelve years from its date, should experience render this necessary. Changes in its provisions had now become indispensable for the security and extension of our commerce. Besides, our merchants had just claims against the Chinese government, for injuries sustained in violation of the treaty. To effect these changes, and to obtain indemnity for these injuries, the Hon. William B. Reed was sent as minister to China. His position proved to be one of great delicacy. England and France were engaged in war against China, and urged the United States to become a party to it. They alleged that it had been undertaken to accomplish objects in which we had a common interest with themselves. This was the fact; but the President did not believe that our grievances, although serious, would justify a resort to hostilities. Whilst Mr. Reed was, therefore, directed to preserve a strict neutrality between the belligerents, he was instructed to coöperate cordially with the ministers of England and France in all peaceful measures to secure by treaty those just concessions to commerce which the civilized nations of the world had a right to expect from China. The Russian government, also, pursued the same line of policy.

The difficulty, then, was to obtain for our country, whilst remaining at peace, the same commercial advantages which England and France might acquire by war. This task our minister performed with tact, ability and

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\* Message, 8th December, 1857, p. 14.

success, by the conclusion of the treaty of Tientsin of the 18th June, 1858, and the two supplemental conventions of Shanghae of the 8th November following.\* These have placed our commercial relations with China on the same satisfactory footing with those of England and France, and have resulted in the actual payment of the full amount of all the just claims of our citizens, leaving a surplus to the credit of the Treasury. This object has been accomplished, whilst our friendly relations with the Chinese government were never for a moment interrupted, but on the contrary have been greatly strengthened.

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\* United States Pamphlet Laws, 1861-'62, p. 177, appendix.

## CHAPTER XI.

1858—1860.

COMPLIMENTARY GIFT FROM PRINCE ALBERT TO MR. BUCHANAN—VISIT  
OF THE PRINCE OF WALES—CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE QUEEN—  
MINOR INCIDENTS OF THE ADMINISTRATION—TRAITS OF CHARACTER  
—LETTERS TO MISS LANE—MARRIAGE OF A YOUNG FRIEND.

THERE are good reasons for believing that the regard which was always expressed by the members of the royal family of England for Mr. Buchanan and his niece was something more than a dictate of policy towards the great nation that he had represented at their court. One token of this regard, which came after he had been made President, was certainly intended as a personal reminder of the pleasant intercourse which he had with the queen and her husband, and of the liking for him which their eldest daughter had often and artlessly manifested. When the Princess Royal was married to the crown prince of Prussia in 1858, her father sent, not to the President of the United States, but to Mr. Buchanan, a copy of the medal struck in honor of the marriage, accompanied by this note :

[PRINCE ALBERT TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

BUCKINGHAM PALACE, Feb. 16, 1858.

MY DEAR MR. BUCHANAN:—

The belief that your recollection of the time passed by you in England will have made you feel an interest in the late happy marriage of our eldest daughter, induces me to send for your acceptance a medal struck in commemoration of that event. You will, I think, be able easily to recognize the Princess Royal's features; the likeness of Prince Frederick William is also very good.

Trusting that your health continues unimpaired, notwithstanding the manifold duties of your high and responsible office, in which hope the queen joins with me, I remain, ever, my dear Mr. Buchanan, yours truly,

ALBERT.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO PRINCE ALBERT.]

WASHINGTON CITY, March 13, 1858.

SIR :—

I have had the honor to receive from Lord Napier your very kind note of the 13th ultimo, with the medal struck in commemoration of the marriage of the Princess Royal with Prince Frederick William. Whilst in England I had upon one or two occasions the privilege of meeting and conversing with the Princess Royal, which caused me to form a very high estimate of the excellence of her character, and to feel a deep interest in her prosperity and happiness. May her destiny prove fortunate, and her married life be crowned by a kind Providence with all the blessings which it is the lot of humanity to enjoy.

With my most respectful regards to the queen, I remain truly yours,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

When the President in June, 1860, learned that the Prince of Wales would visit Canada, he hastened to write to the queen, and to extend a national invitation to the Prince to come to Washington. The following are the letters which passed between the President and the queen :

[THE PRESIDENT TO QUEEN VICTORIA.]

WASHINGTON CITY, June 4, 1860.

TO HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA :—

I have learned from the public journals that the Prince of Wales is about to visit your Majesty's North American dominions. Should it be the intention of His Royal Highness to extend his visit to the United States, I need not say how happy I shall be to give him a cordial welcome to Washington. You may be well assured that everywhere in this country he will be greeted by the American people in such a manner as cannot fail to prove gratifying to your Majesty. In this they will manifest their deep sense of your domestic virtues, as well as the conviction of your merits as a wise, patriotic, and constitutional sovereign.

Your Majesty's most obedient servant,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[QUEEN VICTORIA TO THE PRESIDENT.]

BUCKINGHAM PALACE, June 22, 1860.

MY GOOD FRIEND :—

I have been much gratified at the feelings which prompted you to write to me inviting the Prince of Wales to come to Washington. He intends to

return from Canada through the United States, and it will give him great pleasure to have an opportunity of testifying to you in person that those feelings are fully reciprocated by him. He will thus be able at the same time to mark the respect which he entertains for the Chief Magistrate of a great and friendly state and kindred nation.

The Prince will drop all royal state on leaving my dominions, and travel under the name of Lord Renfrew, as he has done when travelling on the continent of Europe.

The Prince Consort wishes to be kindly remembered to you.

I remain ever your good friend,

VICTORIA RA.

The Prince arrived in Washington early in October, 1860, and he and the principal persons in his suite became the guests of the President at the White House, where they remained until the 6th of that month. During this visit there was an excursion to Mount Vernon, to afford the Prince an opportunity to see the tomb of Washington. The Prince and his suite, accompanied by a considerable number of invited guests, were taken to Mount Vernon on the revenue cutter, *Harriet Lane*, a vessel of the revenue service, which had been named for the President's niece by the Secretary of the Treasury. The President and Miss Lane were of the party. The incidents of the visit are well known, but there is an anecdote connected with it which should be repeated here, because it illustrates Mr. Buchanan's scrupulous care in regard to public money. The Secretary of the Treasury had given liberal orders for a supply of refreshments to be put on board the cutter. When the President heard that the bills for this and other expenses of the excursion were about to be audited and paid at the Treasury, he directed them to be sent to him. They were not paid at the Treasury, but the whole expense was defrayed by a private arrangement between the President and Mr. Cobb, the Secretary.\*

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\* I believe these bills were paid by Mr. Cobb, from his own private means. The whole affair was gotten up by him, and the President and Miss Lane went as invited guests. It is proper to say here that the entertainment of the Prince and his suite at the White House entailed a good deal of expense, for extra servants and other things, and that Congress was never asked to defray any part of it. Mr. Buchanan would never hear of any suggestion that the extraordinary charges of his position should fall upon any fund but his salary and his private income.



[THE PRESIDENT TO QUEEN VICTORIA.]

WASHINGTON, October 6, 1860.

TO HER MAJESTY, QUEEN VICTORIA :—

When I had the honor of addressing your Majesty in June last, I confidently predicted a cordial welcome for the Prince of Wales throughout this country, should he pay us a visit on his return from Canada to England. What was then prophecy has now become history. He has been everywhere received with enthusiasm, and this is attributed not only to the very high regard entertained for your Majesty, but also to his own noble and manly bearing. He has passed through a trying ordeal for a person of his years, and his conduct throughout has been such as became his age and station. Dignified, frank and affable, he has conciliated wherever he has been the kindness and respect of a sensitive and discriminating people.

His visit thus far, has been all your Majesty could have desired, and I have no doubt it will so continue to the end.

The Prince left us for Richmond this morning with the Duke of Newcastle and the other members of his wisely selected suite. I should gladly have prolonged his visit had this been possible consistently with previous engagements. In our domestic circle he won all hearts. His free and ingenuous intercourse with myself evinced both a kind heart and good understanding. I shall ever cherish the warmest wishes for his welfare.

The visit of the Prince to the tomb of Washington and the simple but solemn ceremonies at this consecrated spot will become a historical event and cannot fail to exert a happy influence on the kindred people of the two countries.

With my respectful regards for the Prince Consort,

I remain your Majesty's friend and obedient servant,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[SIR HENRY HOLLAND TO THE PRESIDENT.]

BROOK STREET, LONDON, November 2, 1860.

MY DEAR MR. PRESIDENT :—

In writing to you thus soon after my return to England, my first and foremost object is, to thank you once again, which I do very warmly, for all your kindness during my last visit at Washington. In the course of a life somewhat chequered with various incidents, in various places, I know not that I ever enjoyed five days so much ;—including under this expression both the time of the royal visit, and that which I afterwards passed with you alone. The Executive Mansion is lost to me for the future, if even I ever return to America ; but you I trust will preserve to me hereafter the regard and friendship which it is pleasant to me to possess.

The letter you entrusted to my care was in the hands of the queen exactly fourteen days after I had received it from you. It will give you pleasure, I know, to learn (which I presume you will afterwards do in some way from

the queen herself), how very much she was gratified by it. Both Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell have expressly and strongly mentioned this to me.

All England, as far as I can see and hear, is delighted with the reception of the Prince in the United States. It has produced a strong impression here;—reciprocated I hope and believe in America.

The squadron which brings him home has not yet been heard of; but as they have now been twelve or thirteen days at sea, the arrival can not be long delayed. Probably to-day may bring some intelligence. I shall be impatient to see again the several members of the Prince's suite, and to hear their detail of all that followed after our parting at Washington. They will all, I am persuaded, come back with the same strong sentiment they had at that time regarding their reception in the United States.

You will see that the European continent is still laboring under the same strange political complications;—enlivened, if I may so phrase it, by an occasional battle, but obscured by a dark haze over the future. Lord Palmerston tells me that he believes it will all end rightly, and I am willing to believe him, though I do not see my way towards this result. Many games are evidently at this moment played underhand—not like the open and frank bowling of the ten-pin courts. Our excellent ally, Louis Napoleon, comes under this suspicion, while some suspect that he, between Church and State affairs, is under as much perplexity as his neighbors. It seems even doubtful whether the compulsory concession of the Emperor of Austria will satisfy Hungary, or leave him free for the contingencies of an Italian campaign. If a general war can be avoided, it is the utmost the most sanguine dare hope for. For the present the great interest is concentrated on the spot where the King of Naples still makes a show of resistance to the King of Sardinia and Garibaldi,—a matter that a few days must decide. Then comes the question of the Pope and Rome,—a still more complex and delicate affair, with interests rooted all over Europe.

In England we are happy and prosperous, despite our indifferent harvest,—better, however, than at one time expected. But we shall be fed out of your abundance, if need there be.

The telegraphic news from China seems good as far as it goes, but we shall need the details to know its full import. Lord Palmerston tells me that the last despatches led them to believe that the Emperor of China was very desirous, or at least not unwilling, that his army should be defeated, to rescue himself from the hands of a war party at Peking, which overruled him in his own wishes. Chinese rumors are very apocryphal documents.

I must not intrude further upon your time, by what, after all, is little more than may be drawn from the newspapers of the day. In bidding you farewell, my dear Mr. President, I have but again to repeat the expressions of acknowledgment for kindnesses received, and of cordial regard and respect, with which I remain,

Ever yours most faithfully,

H. HOLLAND.

[QUEEN VICTORIA TO THE PRESIDENT.]

WINDSOR CASTLE, November 19, 1860.

MY GOOD FRIEND:—

Your letter of the 6th ultimo has afforded me the greatest pleasure, containing, as it does, such kind expressions with regard to my son, and assuring me that the character and object of his visit to you and to the United States have been fully appreciated, and that his demeanor and the feelings evinced by him have secured to him your esteem and the general good will of your countrymen.

I purposely delayed the answer to your letter until I should be able to couple it with the announcement of the Prince of Wales's safe return to his home. Contrary winds and stress of weather have much retarded his arrival, but we have been fully compensated for the anxiety which this long delay has naturally caused us, by finding him in such excellent health and spirits, and so delighted with all that he has seen and experienced in his travels.

He cannot sufficiently praise the great cordiality with which he has been everywhere greeted in your country, and the friendly manner in which you received him; and whilst, as a mother, I am grateful for the kindness shown him, I feel impelled to express, at the same time, how deeply I have been touched by the many demonstrations of affection personally toward myself, which his presence has called forth.

I fully reciprocate towards your nation the feelings thus made apparent, and look upon them as forming an important link to cement two nations of kindred origin and character, whose mutual esteem and friendship must always have so material an influence upon their respective development and prosperity.

The interesting and touching scene at the grave of General Washington, to which you allude, may be fitly taken as the type of our present feeling, and I trust of our future relations.

The Prince Consort, who heartily joins in the expressions contained in this letter, wishes to be kindly remembered to you, as we both wish to be to Miss Lane.

Believe me always your good friend,

VICTORIA R.

It is noteworthy that this graceful and cordial letter was written on the eve of that great convulsion which was so soon to put in imminent peril the perpetuity of this Union and the very existence of our Government. To the feelings of the queen and her husband towards this country, secured by President Buchanan's wise and well-timed reception of the Prince of Wales, and the demonstrations everywhere made towards him

in this country, the queen's subjects and the people of the United States owe it, that in the dark and dangerous hour of our civil war, the many irritating causes of alienation were not allowed by the sovereign of England to disrupt the bonds of peace or the neutrality of her government between the warring sections of this Republic. When we look back to the state of feeling that at one time existed in England towards our Government, and remember how many British statesmen of great consequence made serious mistakes, it is but simple historical justice to impute to the queen and her husband a moderating and restraining influence; and if that influence had been wanting, there can be no rational doubt that there would have been a recognition of the Confederate States, not merely as a belligerent and a *de facto* power, but as a permanent and established government, and possibly as an ally of Great Britain.

[FROM B. MORAN.]

LONDON, June 29th, 1860.

MY DEAR SIR:—

The publication of your invitation to the Prince of Wales to become your guest has caused a great deal of happiness in England, and the newspapers generally speak highly of the act. I send, herewith, an editorial from the *Morning Chronicle* of to-day, in which there are some deserved and well-expressed compliments. The British people have more respect for you than for any President since Washington, and I have never seen a personal attack on you in any English journal. Whenever you are spoken of, it is in a tone of regard, and never in a carping spirit.

We are almost run down with visitors from home. From forty to seventy are here daily, and I have to see them all. I have my hands full. This is comfort to me, for I would be unhappy without employment.

. . . . . I hope you will not take offence when I say that I hope the Baltimore Convention have nominated you, notwithstanding your declination to be a candidate. And if such be the case, you will be elected triumphantly. We are anxiously waiting for news on this point.

With best regards to yourself and Miss Lane, I am

Ever faithfully yours,

B. MORAN.\*

Both with reference to this visit of the Prince of Wales, and to some other incidents of the administration, and to certain

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\* Mr. Moran was one of the secretaries of the American legation under Mr. Dallas.

traits of Mr. Buchanan's character, I insert here an extract from Mr. J. Buchanan Henry's communication to me, before I proceed to the trying period of "secession," which is to occupy a large part of the remaining pages of this volume.

As private secretary, I had to be in my office, a room on the southwest corner of the second story adjoining that of the President, whenever he was there, which was from eight in the morning until luncheon at one o'clock, and from that time until five, when, with rare exceptions, he took an hour's walk. I doubt whether Mr. Buchanan used his coach and horses a dozen times a year, except during the summer when he was at the "Soldier's Home;" then he drove in to the executive mansion in the morning and out in the evening. He greatly preferred the exercise of walking, with its exchange of kindly personal greetings with friends. On returning from this daily exercise he dined with the members of his household. It was not then etiquette for the President to accept dinner or other invitations, for the wise reason, I believe, that any discrimination would have been impossible without giving offence, and universal acceptance would have been impossible. Once a week Mr. Buchanan caused some of the Cabinet members and their wives to be invited to dinner "en famille" and as there was but little ceremony and all were agreeable guests, with common and identical interests for the most part, I remember that these were most pleasant little entertainments. During the winter, or properly during the session of Congress, there was what might be called a State dinner, once a week, an entertainment of a much more formal and formidable character, in the large dining-room, capable of seating about forty persons. The first of these dinners was, I think, given to the Justices of the Supreme Court, the next to the Diplomatic Corps, then to the members of the Senate, and the House of Representatives, including each member in his turn, according to official seniority, except in a very few cases where individuals had by discourtesy or offence rendered such an invitation improper. Miss Lane and I attended to the details of these social matters, including dinner and party attending, making visits, etc., for the President. Among the most troublesome of these duties was the proper assigning of precedence to the guests at these so-called state dinners; a delicate task in these Washington entertainments, as any neglect would pretty surely give offence. Miss Lane, from natural aptitude and tact and the experience she had in London whilst her uncle was minister there, managed these details very cleverly. I had the difficult and worrying task at these dinners, in the short time between the arrival of the forty odd guests in the drawing-room and the procession into the great dining-room, of ascertaining the name of each gentleman and telling him what lady he was to take in, and probably introducing the parties to each other. It was sometimes a very *mauvaise quart d'heure* of expectation for me; as I was pretty sure to find at the last moment, when the Presi-

dent was leading the procession to the table, that some male guest, perhaps not accustomed to such matters, had strayed away from his intended partner, leaving the lady standing alone and much embarrassed. I had then to give them a fresh start.

As private secretary I was charged with the expenditure of the library fund, the payment of the steward, messengers, and also of the expenditures of the household which were paid out of the President's private purse. I might here mention that these latter expenditures generally exceeded the President's salary in the winter months, because President Buchanan enjoyed entertaining and entertained liberally from inclination. In summer the social entertaining being much less, and the President being at the Soldier's Home, a modest but pretty stone cottage on the hills near Washington, the expenses were much less. Taking the year through, the salary of \$25,000 was nearly sufficient to pay the actual expenses of the executive mansion, but nothing beyond that, or to allow the President to save any part of it; but on the contrary, I think he had to draw upon his private means to a considerable extent.

My first duty was to organize the private secretary's office. I had a set of books or records carefully prepared, in which could be briefly entered the date of receipt of any letter or communication addressed to the President, the name of the writer—subject-matter condensed to the utmost—dates and substance of answer, if any, to what department referred, and date of such reference. If the letter contained a recommendation for appointment to office, these records indicated the office, the name of the applicant and by whom recommended. Such communications as the President ought to see I folded and briefed and took them to him every morning at eight o'clock and received his instructions as to the answer I should make, and in some instances he would answer them himself, if of a purely personal nature. Either he or I would then endorse upon all letters "Respectfully referred to the Secretary of State," War, or otherwise, according as the communication in subject matter related to the business of that department; and once a day I would enclose them, as they accumulated, in large envelopes, with printed addresses, and despatch them by the messenger to the several departments. By this system I could recall any letter or communication of any kind by reference to the entries on my books, whenever the President desired them for action. This was the routine of the Executive Office.

It will hardly be credited that this simple and natural course of business gave the pretext at a later day, and I can scarcely suppress my indignation as I think of it, for that infamous "mare's nest," discovered by Covode of Pennsylvania, a member of the House of Representatives, and for the investigation of which he obtained a committee with full powers. The letters of General Patterson and others to which it related, were simply referred to the Secretary of the Navy according to the ordinary and proper routine of business in the Executive Office, as I have above described, and were endorsed exactly as thousands of others had been either by the President or by me, and such

endorsement had therefore no signification whatever. It was a cruel and malicious pretence to infer that the Secretary of the Navy would attach any importance whatever to the mere act of reference by the President himself because a multitude of such papers were similarly endorsed either by him or by me every day.

There would have been no room to keep such a mass of papers in the White House, and they would have been out of place there, as they related to the business of the several cabinet officers, and yet upon this miserable basis was the "Covode investigation" erected, and the first attempt ever made to soil a spotless public life, extending over more than forty years in every exalted station of our Government, as member of the legislature of Pennsylvania, many years member of the House of Representatives, Senator of the United States, twice diplomatic representative of the nation at the two principal courts of Europe, Secretary of State of the United States, and finally President of the Republic. The meagre partisan fruits of the investigation when made, and the refusal, to its credit be it said, of a bitterly hostile opposition in the House to propose even a censure, clearly showed its baseless character.

The committee, with well simulated delicacy, never summoned me to appear and testify, but sent for my clerk, and after examining him were glad, it seems, to drop it. I dwell upon this matter, because in a long career of public service it is the only attempt ever made to impeach Mr. Buchanan's public or private integrity. He himself felt it very bitterly, and I think it will be admitted that he administered a wholesome and deserved rebuke to the House in his special message of protest. Although the result demonstrated that there was not the most gossamer pretext for the charge made by Covode, I think Mr. Buchanan's friends can be well pleased at its having been made, and its futility exposed, as it leads to the fair conclusion for history, that Mr. Buchanan was invulnerable to any assaults upon the honor of his public or private life. Surely this is much to be able to say of a public servant, and a nation capable of breeding many such public men can justly congratulate itself.

Another feature of Mr. Buchanan's public life I will refer to, which possibly may not now be esteemed a great virtue. I mean his dislike of nepotism. Not unnaturally, there were members of our family who would have been very glad to have obtained civil or other appointments during his administration. But such was Mr. Buchanan's freely expressed repugnance to using his public authority for the advantage of his relatives, that I am not aware that any of them even made application to him for office of any kind. Public policy clearly indicates the propriety and desirability of the President's private secretary being, if possible, a blood relation, upon the ground that the honor and interests of the President and his high office can be most safely entrusted to one having an interest in his good name and fame, and therefore more guarded against temptation of any kind. I therefore do not consider the selection of myself, or my cousin Mr. James Buchanan, who followed me, as any exception to what I have stated. To such an extent did I know that my uncle

disliked the appointing of relatives to office, that I never dared to tell him of my desire to be appointed to the paymaster corps of the navy, a position which from my nomadic tastes I had long coveted, and I concluded to save myself the mortification of a refusal. I could exercise no influence with him for myself. As an instance of this, I will mention that when the Hon. John Cadwalader, late Judge of United States Circuit Court of Eastern Pennsylvania, was appointed to that judgeship by Mr. Buchanan, he tendered me the clerkship of his court, a permanent and honorable position, and one that I should have been willing to accept. Judge Cadwalader had been my legal preceptor, and for years my warm personal friend, so that the proffered position would have been in every way agreeable and proper. Although I was then residing in New York as a private citizen, I consulted Mr. Buchanan as to its acceptance by me, and on finding that he entertained serious reasonable objections to my doing so, I declined the compliment. The President said the public might justly infer that there had been some previous understanding between him and the new judge, and that however erroneous such a conclusion would be, it would be natural. Inasmuch, therefore, as my acceptance might work injury, both to the President and his excellent appointee, I quickly made my decision. These little events, unknown to the public, will serve to illustrate the delicate sense of right and the very appearance of right, which so strongly marked his public service.

Among the minor but interesting incidents of the administration, I may mention the receipt of the first message by the new ocean telegraph from the British sovereign, and the President's reply to it. As the cable became silent almost immediately after, the public were for a long time in doubt whether any message had really been transmitted over the wonderful wire under the sea. I well remember the reception of the message, and I had it and the draft of the President's reply in my possession for years afterwards as a curiosity.

You doubtless know all about the visit of the Prince of Wales to President Buchanan, and the pleasant social incidents following in its train. The Duke of Newcastle, Lord St. Germain and Sir Henry Holland—the latter an old friend of the President's—in the Prince's suite, were also guests at the White House. I was then residing in New York, and was sent for by my uncle to my old quarters in Washington, to assist in entertaining these distinguished persons, who, though entertained at the private expense of Mr. Buchanan, were nevertheless looked upon, and properly so, as the guests of the nation.

Probably among the most interesting, and I may say touching, incidents of this visit, was a trip made by the royal guest and suite, in company with the President, to Mount Vernon. I well remember the whole party—the tall, venerable form of the President, the youthful Prince, and the other guests representing the highest social order in Great Britain, standing bare-headed in front of the tomb of Washington. It was a most impressive and singular spectacle, and I have often thought it would make a very striking subject for a large historical painting. The Prince planted a small tree near the tomb in



commemoration of his visit, but I have never learned whether it grew. Many interesting incidents occurred in this visit, but I shall not repeat them. I will only say that I never saw a more agreeable or unrestrained intercourse of a social character—for the visit had no political significance whatever, and the Queen and the Prince subsequently expressed their appreciation of the President's hospitality, the former in an autograph letter, and the latter both by letter and the presentation of a three-quarter length portrait, painted by one of Britain's greatest artists. The value of this was enhanced by the delicacy which marked its presentation *after* Mr. Buchanan had retired to private life as a simple citizen. These letters and portrait are now in the possession of my cousin, and also the autograph letter of the Prince Consort to Mr. Buchanan on the occasion of the marriage of the Princess Royal, in which he uses some pleasant expressions of a personal character, and referring back to Mr. Buchanan's residence in London as minister. I think the era of good feeling between America and England, and especially the enduring friendship of the Queen herself for the United States, so decidedly shown by her during our terrible war, may be traced as one of the happy results of the visit of the Prince of Wales to the President. The kindly feelings of these two great nations towards each other, a *rapprochement*, now so marked, had, I think, its beginning at that period.

Another trait of Mr. Buchanan I must not omit alluding to. He made it an invariable rule, as President, to accept no gifts or presents of any value, even from the most intimate friends, and it was part of my duty to return them at once, with a kind but emphatic declination, telling the donor that the President had made it a rule, not to be broken, that he could accept no gifts; and I was directed, at the same time, to express his thanks for the friendly intentions in all cases where it seemed probable that it was not a bold effort to purchase favor, and from purely selfish motives. A number of costly gifts were thus returned.

After a personal intercourse with Mr. Buchanan from my boyhood, more or less intimate, and therefore having had an opportunity to judge, I can conscientiously say that I never knew a man of purer private life, or one actuated by nobler or more upright motives. He was, to us around him, an object of unbroken respect and reverence. I can truly aver that I never heard him express an ignoble sentiment, or do an act that could diminish that respect and reverence. He was strong willed, rather austere, and somewhat exacting to those around him, but always and in all things the Christian gentleman. This was the impression made upon me as a youth, and now, as I look back from later life, I see no cause to change or modify my estimate of his character. His only fault, if fault it be, was a too great readiness to forgive and conciliate those who had been his enemies, regarding it as a triumph for his principles and a vindication of his motives. And yet this has been at times attributed to him as a weakness.

Mr. Buchanan had an extraordinary memory, and could repeat verbatim much of the classic authors of his college days, and I remember he often put

me to shame, when I was yet in the midst of my books, by questions that I failed to answer to my satisfaction. He was also a remarkably fluent and agreeable conversationalist—a rare and valuable gift—and it was one of my greatest pleasures to listen to him, when in congenial company, relating anecdotes of his great contemporaries in public life at home, and incidents occurring during his missions in St. Petersburg and later in London. This quality made him a most agreeable companion among men, and an especial favorite with the fair sex, whose friendship in turn he appreciated and enjoyed to the end of his life. The correctness of his own private life, and his association with only the nobler of the other sex, resulted in his never entertaining or expressing cynical views of them, so common in men's later years.

I do not know if you have any account of Mr. Buchanan's personal appearance or dress. The best likeness of him is a miniature portrait on ivory, by Brown of Philadelphia, now in the possession of his brother, the Rev. Dr. Buchanan. I have an oil photograph painted in 1857, which is excellent; also a bust in marble by a Boston sculptor, which is good. My cousin has a half-length portrait, painted by Eicholtz about the year 1833. His figure and general appearance whilst President is very accurately represented in a full-length engraving by Buttre of New York. On the whole, I think it is the best average representation of him extant. Healy executed a portrait of Mr. Buchanan at the White House, but he was an impatient sitter, and I do not think it was very successful.

Mr. Buchanan, in his sketch of the four last months of his administration, gives a short account of a remarkable naval expedition ordered by him to Paraguay, to settle certain difficulties with that republic. This naval demonstration on a considerable scale was entirely successful, and resulted in a permanent peace with that country ever since. It had, however, this most uncommon feature to distinguish it, that it cost the United States not one dollar beyond the usual small annual appropriation for the navy. I sometimes wonder whether any other such expedition of its size and importance, in this or any other country, can show such an example of economy, honesty and efficiency and success combined, as did this.

[TO MISS LANE, IN NEW YORK.]

WASHINGTON, May 20th, 1858.

MY DEAR HARRIET:—

Learning that you were about to purchase furniture in New York [for the White House], I requested Doctor Blake to furnish me a statement of the balance of the appropriation unexpended. This balance is \$8,369.02. In making your purchases, therefore, I wish you to consider that this sum must answer our purpose until the end of my term. I wish you, therefore, not to expend the whole of it, but to leave enough to meet all contingencies up till 4th March, 1861. Any sum which may be expended above the appropriation I

shall most certainly pay out of my own pocket. I shall never ask Congress for the deficiency.

Who should make his appearance this morning but Mr. Keitt.\* After talking about other matters for some time, he said he was married. I expressed strong doubts upon the subject, when he insisted that he was actually and *bona fide* married. The lady is Miss Sparks, whom he has been so long addressing.

With my kind regards to Mr. and Mrs. R., I remain, etc.

[TO MISS LANE, IN PHILADELPHIA.]

October 15th, 1858.

We have not yet heard from you since you left us. I hope you arrived safely in Philadelphia, and did not contract a hoarseness in talking on the way. We get along very nicely since your absence and will give a big dinner on Thursday next. I have not seen any of your lady friends since your departure, and can therefore give you no news.

Well! we have met the enemy in Pennsylvania and we are theirs. This I have anticipated for three months, and was not taken by surprise, except as to the extent of our defeat. I am astonished at myself for bearing it with so much philosophy.

The conspirators against poor Jones have at length succeeded in hunting him down. Ever since my election the hounds have been in pursuit of him. I now deeply regret—but I shall say no more. With the blessing of Providence, I shall endeavor to raise him up and place him in some position where they can not reach him.

Judge Black, General Anderson of Tennessee, Mr. Brenner, and Mr. Van Dyke dined with me yesterday, and we had a merry time of it, laughing, among other things, over our crushing defeat. It is so great that it is almost absurd.

We will present a record of success at the meeting of Congress which has rarely been equalled. We have hitherto succeeded in all our undertakings.

Poor bleeding Kansas is quiet, and is behaving herself in an orderly manner; but her wrongs have melted the hearts of the sympathetic Pennsylvanians, or rather Philadelphians. In the interior of the State the tariff was the damaging question, and in defeating Jones, the iron interest have prostrated a man who could render them more service than all the Republican Representatives from Pennsylvania. He will be a loss to the whole country in the House of Representatives.

I have heard nothing of the good and excellent Robert since you left us. He is a man among a thousand. I wish I could say so much for his brother.

It is growing late and I must retire. I sleep much better now, but not near so well as at the Soldiers' Home.

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\* Of South Carolina. Pronounced Kitt.

May 13th, 1859.

I send you an oration received from Hon. William Porcher Miles,\* and franked by him to yourself. A precious recognition! . . . . .

I wrote a long letter to Mrs. Roosevelt, ten days ago, and left it on my table open. It marvellously disappeared, and I had neither courage nor time to copy it from memory. I know not what has become of it, but it contains nothing which might not be published in the *New York Herald*. My respect and admiration for Mrs. Roosevelt, to be sure, appear in the letter; but this is well known and does me honor. It is possible that in clearing my own table I may have by mistake torn this letter up with other manuscripts; but I can not believe it.

I have but little news. Mr. Magraw came to us on Saturday last and still remains, much to my gratification. We get along very comfortably and quietly. Miss Hetty is very busy. Washington, they say, is extremely dull. I called yesterday at Mr. Thompson's, just before dinner. The lady was not at home. She had gone to a travelling circus and show in company with Mrs. Gwin, her sister and Miss Lucy. I made no remark to Mr. Thompson on receiving the information, except that you would certainly have been of the party had you been in Washington.

I met Mrs. Conrad and her daughters on the street the other day and walked with them some distance. She does not appear to have seen much of Lord Lyons. I think he keeps himself very much to himself. Count Sartiges has been here several times. I shall miss him more than I would any of the foreign ministers.

May 14th, 1859.

I send you the enclosed letter from Mr. ———, of New York. It speaks for itself. He seems to be a warm-hearted German, and I would advise you to address him a few lines. In acknowledging the compliment, I have said I would send his letter to you at Judge Roosevelt's. You have been hailed as "The Great Mother of the Indians," and it must gratify you to learn that your adopted countrymen desire to perpetuate your name by giving it to their children.

Two of the Secretaries and myself were to have visited Baltimore to-day to select a site for the Federal Courts; but we agreed to postpone our visit until Monday to enable them to attend a dinner given by Lord Lyons to-day to the members of the cabinet. It is quite probable we shall be accompanied on Monday by Mrs. Thompson, Mrs. Gwin and other ladies.

What means the ominous conjunction between Mr. Van Buren and Mr. Douglas at the ——— Hotel. I do not, however, consider it ominous at all, though others do.

Sir William ought to have been very careful in obeying his instructions, especially after his former experience in South America. The British government are not at all pleased with him. We know this from Lord Lyons.

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\* Of South Carolina.

Here I was called away after ten at night, to hear the music of the Knights Templars. It was, I think, excellent; though I am, as you know, no great judge. Good-night! My affectionate regards to Mrs. Roosevelt and my respectful compliments to the Judge.

Mr. Thompson and myself intend to set out for Chapel Hill on Monday, 10th instant. I think Mr. Magraw will accompany us. They are making great preparations to receive us. I hope you are enjoying yourself. Stay as long as it affords you pleasure. We are getting along very well. Miss Hetty is very busy in having things put in order for the summer.

May 18th, 1859.

I return Lady Ouseley's letter. When you write please to remember me to her in the very kindest terms. I should be sorry indeed to think I should never meet her again.

The conduct of Sir William has been most decidedly disapproved by Lord Malmesbury. Of this we have the official evidence. I am truly sorry he did not obey his instructions. But of this say nothing to Mrs. Roosevelt.

Our two successful diplomatists, Messrs. Reed and Bowden, with their ladies, are to dine with me to-day *en famille*. Mr. Cobb now dines here regularly.

I never laughed as much on any one day as on Monday last at Baltimore and on the way.

Remember me always most affectionately to Mrs. Roosevelt, and very kindly to the Judge.

June 10th, 1859.

I have received your favor of yesterday. We returned to Washington on Tuesday morning last from our visit to North Carolina. On Wednesday morning Miss Hetty left for Wheatland with my full and entire approbation, and I wish to say to you emphatically, that you need not return home on my account. I shall be rejoiced to see you whenever you may think proper to return; but I get along both comfortably and happily in the absence both of Miss Hetty and yourself.

I am sorry to find that your excursion to West Point on the Harriet Lane, has been made the subject of newspaper criticism on yourself. This is most ungallant and ungentlemanly. The practice, however, of employing national vessels on pleasure excursions, to gratify any class of people, is a fair subject of public criticism. You know how much I condemned your former trip on the same vessel, and I did not expect you would fall into a second error. The thing, however, is past and gone, and let it pass. After a fair time shall have elapsed, it is my purpose to cause general orders to be issued by the Treasury and Navy Departments to put a stop to the practice.

I am truly rejoiced to learn that James Henry is succeeding in his practice.

I have not the least idea of paying the price you mention for a cane. Let it pass for the present. I will get Mr. Baker to attend to it.

Washington has been very quiet but very agreeable since you left. I dined yesterday with Mrs. Thompson. Mrs. Gwin and her sister and Mr. Cobb were the only persons present out of the family. We had a merry time of it. The same party are to dine with Mrs. Gwin on Tuesday next.

It was with the utmost reluctance I removed Mr. ———, though his removal was inevitable. His brother ——— has done him much injury. I have known him long, and can say with truth that I know not a more unprincipled man in the United States. I wished to avoid the publication of Mr. Holt's report, but Mr. ——— and his brother made this impossible. The trio are now all together in happy communion, I mean ———, ———, and ———, the last the most contemptible of the set.

I have just had long and interesting letters from Jones and Preston. They are both pleased, and both get along well. The former evidently stands well with the Austrian government, and gives us valuable information.

I remain, yours affectionately, etc.

BEDFORD SPRINGS, August 22, 1860.

I have only time to write a line before Mr. Wagner, the messenger of Mr. Thompson, leaves. I am well, and the water is producing its usual good effect. The company is reduced very much, though what remains is agreeable and respectable. My visits from the neighborhood are numerous.

Give my love to Lily. If things proceed as from appearances we might anticipate she will soon be on the diplomatic corps, but I yet entertain doubts whether she will stand fire at the decisive moment.

Many inquiries have been made about you here, and regrets expressed that you did not accompany me. In haste, yours affectionately,

[FROM MISS MACALESTER.]

GLENGARRY, TORRISDALE, Oct. 8, 1860.

MY DEAR MR. BUCHANAN:—

You have always evinced such a kind and anxious interest in regard to my matrimonial arrangements, that I feel it a duty, as well as a pleasure, to relieve your solicitude on the subject, by assuring you that I at last really am engaged. I consider you entirely responsible for this result, my dear Mr. Buchanan, for you so terrified me last spring and summer by your forebodings, and made me to fully realize my almost hopeless condition and approaching *superannuation*, that I determined to trifle no longer with time. I think, therefore, I may fairly claim your kind wishes and congratulations upon my escape from the prospect of a dreary spinsterhood, and in due season I shall also claim your fulfillment of a promise made long ago, and frequently repeated since, to be present at my wedding when that incomprehensible event takes place. *En attendant*, believe me always, my dear Mr. Buchanan,

With truest love yours,

LILY L. MACALESTER.

[TO MISS MACALESTER.\*]

WASHINGTON, October 10, 1860.

MY DEAR LILY :—

I have received your favor of the 10th, announcing your engagement, and most sincerely and ardently do I hope that your marriage may prove auspicious and secure your future happiness and prosperity. I need not assure you that I feel all the interest which devoted friendship can inspire in your permanent welfare.

I had thought that "the prospect of a dreary spinsterhood" would not have impelled you into an engagement, without saying a word to your superannuated bachelor friend, but when young ladies have determined to marry they will go ahead.

May you enjoy all the blessings in your matrimonial state which I ardently desire, and you so richly deserve. Always your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

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\* This lady, daughter of Charles Macalester, Esq., of Philadelphia, married Mr. Berghmans, Secretary of the Belgian Legation in Washington. He died about ten years since.

## CHAPTER XII.

1860—March and June.

THE SO-CALLED "COVODE INVESTIGATION."

REFERENCE has been made by Mr. Henry, in a part of his communication quoted in the last chapter, to a proceeding in the House of Representatives, which has been called the "Covode Investigation." It is proper that a detailed account of this occurrence should be here given.

Among the lower, or rather the lowest, political tactics, inculcation of a retiring administration has often been resorted to for promoting the success of the opposite party, and it seems not infrequently to have been the calculation that the effect produced would be in proportion to the grossness of the imputations. Mr. Buchanan could not hope to escape calumny. None of his predecessors, not even the most illustrious of them all, not even Washington himself, had escaped it. Scarcely any of them, however, had been made the object of this kind of attack, by a method so base and by means so foul, as those to which President Buchanan was now to be subjected. Before any of the troubles of secession arrived, before either of the political parties had made its nomination for the next Presidential election, it was determined that an assault should be made upon him that would render him and his administration odious to the people of the country.

It is certainly unavoidable, perhaps it is well, that free governments should be administered by parties. In a vigilant, jealous and active opposition, there is great security against the misuse of power by those who hold it. But the freedom of opposition, like the freedom of the press, can easily degenerate into licentiousness; and the greater the latitude allowed by the political maxims or habits of a people, the greater will be the



danger of abuse of that right of criticism and inculcation which is essential to liberty, to purity, and to the public interests. Happily, there are some restraints upon the exercise of this right, imposed by the forms of procedure which our Constitution has prescribed when the conduct of the executive branch of the Government is to be called in question by the House of Representatives. When these restraints are violated, as they were violated against President Buchanan, there is but one judgment for history to pronounce. Those who institute a proceeding that is out of the limits of their constitutional function, for the purpose of exciting hatred of one who fills for the time a coördinate and independent department of the Government, and who conduct such a proceeding in secret, leave upon the records of the country a condemnation of themselves; and it is some evidence of the progress which a people are making in freeing their partisan warfare from such abuses, if we are able to say, as probably we can say, that such a proceeding would not be tolerated at the present day by any portion of the people of this country, as that which was begun and prosecuted against President Buchanan in the spring and summer of 1860.

The House of Representatives was at this time under the control of a majority held by the opponents of the administration. If they had reason to believe that the President had been guilty of an exercise, or of any attempt at an exercise, of improper influence over legislation, or that he or any of his subordinate executive officers had defeated, or attempted to defeat, the execution of any law, or that he had failed or refused to execute any law, their course was plain. In regard to the President, it was their duty to make a specific charge, to investigate it openly, and to impeach him before the Senate, if the evidence afforded reasonable ground to believe that the charge could be substantiated. In regard to his subordinates, their power to investigate was somewhat broader, because, as a legislative body, the House of Representatives might have occasion to remedy by legislation any future wrongs of the same kind. But over the President, they had no authority of investigation or inquiry, excepting as the impeaching body to which the Constitution had committed the duty of accusation. By no constitutional propriety, by no precedent and no principle, could

an accusation of official misconduct on the part of the President be brought within the jurisdiction of the House, excepting by the initiation of a proceeding looking to his impeachment. Any proceeding, aside from the impeaching process, could have no object and no effect but to propagate calumny, without opportunity for exculpation and defence; and from the beginning to the end of this extraordinary persecution every step was marked by the design with which it was originated.

It began by the introduction of a resolution, offered in the House by Mr. Covode, a member from Pennsylvania, on the 5th March, 1860; and to make way for its introduction, he moved and obtained a suspension of the rules. This was of course by previous concert. The Speaker, after the reading of the resolution, ruled that it was not debatable. Attempts were made by different members to point out the absence from the resolution of any specific or tangible charge, or to extract from the mover some declaration that he had been informed or believed that the President had been guilty of some official misconduct, within the generality and vagueness of the inquiry that he proposed to have made. All these efforts were put down by the Speaker and by clamorous cries of "order." It became evident that the resolution was to pass, as a foregone conclusion, without a moment's consideration of its character or its terms. Under the operation of "the previous question," it was adopted, and the mover was afterwards placed by the Speaker at the head of the committee which he called for. Thus, so far as there was any accuser, that accuser was made the principal judge who was to try the accusation; and by the terms of the resolution, all the accusation that was made was wrapped in the following vague and indefinite language:

*Resolved*, That a committee of five members be appointed by the Speaker, for the purpose, first, of investigating whether the President of the United States, or any officer of the Government, has, by money, patronage, or other improper means, sought to influence the action of Congress, or any committee thereof, for or against the passage of any law appertaining to the rights of any State or Territory; and, second, also to inquire into and investigate whether any officer or officers of the Government have, by combination or otherwise, prevented or defeated, or attempted to prevent or defeat, the execution of any law or laws now upon the statute book, and whether the President has failed or refused to compel the execution of any law thereof.

The committee, under the mover of the resolution as chairman, proceeded to make, with closed doors, a general investigation into every thing that any enemy of the President could bring to them. Never, in the history of parliamentary proceedings, since they ceased to be made the instruments of mere partisan malice, had there been such a violation of constitutional principles and of every maxim of justice. A secret inquisition into the conduct of a President of the United States, not conducted in the forms or with the safeguards of the impeachment process, without one specific accusation, was a proceeding unknown alike to the Constitution and to the practice, the habits and the instincts, of the people of the United States. The President was left to learn what he could of the doings of this committee from what they permitted to leak into the public prints, or from other sources. More concerned for the safety of his successors in the great office which he held than for his own reputation, but not unmindful of the duty which he owed to himself, he transmitted to the House, on the 28th of March, the following message, embracing a dignified and energetic protest against this unexampled proceeding :

TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:—

After a delay which has afforded me ample time for reflection, and after much and careful deliberation, I find myself constrained by an imperious sense of duty, as a coördinate branch of the Federal Government, to protest against the first two clauses of the first resolution adopted by the House of Representatives on the 5th instant, and published in the *Congressional Globe* on the succeeding day. These clauses are in the following words: "*Resolved*, That a committee of five members be appointed by the Speaker, for the purpose, 1st, of investigating whether the President of the United States, or any other officer of the Government, has, by money, patronage, or other improper means, sought to influence the action of Congress, or any committee thereof, for or against the passage of any law appertaining to the rights of any State or Territory; and 2d, also to inquire into and investigate whether any officer or officers of the Government have, by combination or otherwise, prevented or defeated, or attempted to prevent or defeat, the execution of any law or laws now upon the statute book, and whether the President has failed or refused to compel the execution of any law thereof."

I confine myself exclusively to these two branches of the resolution, because the portions of it which follow relate to alleged abuses in post offices, navy yards, public buildings, and other public works of the United States.

In such cases inquiries are highly proper in themselves, and belong equally to the Senate and the House as incident to their legislative duties, and being necessary to enable them to discover and to provide the appropriate legislative remedies for any abuses which may be ascertained. Although the terms of the latter portion of the resolution are extremely vague and general, yet my sole purpose in adverting to them at present is to mark the broad line of distinction between the accusatory and the remedial clauses of this resolution. The House of Representatives possess no power under the Constitution over the first or accusatory portion of the resolution, except as an impeaching body; whilst over the last, in common with the Senate, their authority as a legislative body is fully and cheerfully admitted.

It is solely in reference to the first or impeaching power that I propose to make a few observations. Except in this single case, the Constitution has invested the House of Representatives with no power, no jurisdiction, no supremacy whatever over the President. In all other respects he is quite as independent of them as they are of him. As a coördinate branch of the Government he is their equal. Indeed, he is the only direct representative on earth of the people of all and each of the sovereign States. To them, and to them alone, is he responsible whilst acting within the sphere of his constitutional duty, and not in any manner to the House of Representatives. The people have thought proper to invest him with the most honorable, responsible, and dignified office in the world, and the individual, however unworthy, now holding this exalted position, will take care, so far as in him lies, that their rights and prerogatives shall never be violated in his person, but shall pass to his successors unimpaired by the adoption of a dangerous precedent. He will defend them to the last extremity against any unconstitutional attempt, come from what quarter it may, to abridge the constitutional rights of the Executive, and render him subservient to any human power except themselves.

The people have not confined the President to the exercise of executive duties. They have also conferred upon him a large measure of legislative discretion. No bill can become a law without his approval, as representing the people of the United States, unless it shall pass after his veto by a majority of two-thirds of both Houses. In his legislative capacity he might, in common with the Senate and the House, institute an inquiry to ascertain any facts which ought to influence his judgment in approving or vetoing any bill. This participation in the performance of legislative duties between the coördinate branches of the Government ought to inspire the conduct of all of them, in their relations toward each other, with mutual forbearance and respect. At least each has a right to demand justice from the other. The cause of complaint is, that the constitutional rights and immunities of the Executive have been violated in the person of the President.

The trial of an impeachment of the President before the Senate on charges preferred and prosecuted against him by the House of Representatives, would be an imposing spectacle for the world. In the result, not only his removal

from the Presidential office would be involved, but, what is of infinitely greater importance to himself, his character, both in the eyes of the present and of future generations, might possibly be tarnished. The disgrace cast upon him would in some degree be reflected upon the character of the American people who elected him. Hence the precautions adopted by the Constitution to secure a fair trial. On such a trial it declares that "the Chief Justice shall preside." This was doubtless because the framers of the Constitution believed it to be possible that the Vice-President might be biassed by the fact that "in case of the removal of the President from office," "the same shall devolve on the Vice-President."

The preliminary proceedings in the House in the case of charges which may involve impeachment, have been well and wisely settled by long practice upon principles of equal justice both to the accused and to the people. The precedent established in the case of Judge Peck, of Missouri, in 1831, after a careful review of all former precedents, will, I venture to predict, stand the test of time. In that case, Luke Edward Lawless, the accuser, presented a petition to the House, in which he set forth minutely and specifically his causes of complaint. He prayed "that the conduct and proceedings in this behalf of said Judge Peck may be inquired into by your honorable body, and such decision made thereon as to your wisdom and justice shall seem proper." This petition was referred to the Judiciary Committee; such has ever been deemed the appropriate committee to make similar investigations. It is a standing committee, supposed to be appointed without reference to any special case, and at all times is presumed to be composed of the most eminent lawyers in the House from different portions of the Union, whose acquaintance with judicial proceedings, and whose habits of investigation, qualify them peculiarly for the task. No tribunal, from their position and character, could in the nature of things be more impartial. In the case of Judge Peck, the witnesses were selected by the committee itself, with a view to ascertain the truth of the charge. They were cross-examined by him, and everything was conducted in such a manner as to afford him no reasonable cause of complaint. In view of this precedent, and, what is of far greater importance, in view of the Constitution and the principles of eternal justice, in what manner has the President of the United States been treated by the House of Representatives? Mr. John Covode, a Representative from Pennsylvania, is the accuser of the President. Instead of following the wise precedents of former times, and especially that in the case of Judge Peck, and referring the accusation to the Committee on the Judiciary, the House have made my accuser one of my judges.

To make the accuser the judge is a violation of the principles of universal justice, and is condemned by the practice of all civilized nations. Every free-man must revolt at such a spectacle. I am to appear before Mr. Covode, either personally or by a substitute, to cross-examine the witnesses which he may produce before himself to sustain his own accusations against me, and perhaps even this poor boon may be denied to the President.

And what is the nature of the investigation which his resolution proposes to institute? It is as vague and general as the English language affords words in which to make it. The committee is to inquire, not into any specific charge or charges, but whether the President has, "by money, patronage, or other improper means, sought to influence," not the action of any individual member or members of Congress, but "the action" of the entire body "of Congress" itself, "or any committee thereof." The President might have had some glimmering of the nature of the offence to be investigated, had his accuser pointed to the act or acts of Congress which he sought to pass or to defeat by the employment of "money, patronage, or other improper means." But the accusation is bounded by no such limits. It extends to the whole circle of legislation; to interference "for or against the passage of any law appertaining to the rights of any State or Territory." And what law does not appertain to the rights of some State or Territory? And what law or laws has the President failed to execute? These might easily have been pointed out had any such existed.

Had Mr. Lawless asked an inquiry to be made by the House whether Judge Peck, in general terms, had not violated his judicial duties, without the specification of any particular act, I do not believe there would have been a single vote in that body in favor of the inquiry. Since the time of the Star Chamber and of general warrants, there has been no such proceeding in England.

The House of Representatives, the high impeaching power of the country, without consenting to hear a word of explanation, have indorsed this accusation against the President, and made it their own act. They even refused to permit a member to inquire of the President's accuser what were the specific charges against him. Thus, in this preliminary accusation of "high crimes and misdemeanors" against a coördinate branch of the Government, under the impeaching power, the House refused to hear a single suggestion even in regard to the correct mode of proceeding, but, without a moment's delay, passed the accusatory resolutions under the pressure of the previous question. In the institution of a prosecution for any offence against the most humble citizen—and I claim for myself no greater rights than he enjoys—the Constitution of the United States, and of the several States, require that he shall be informed, in the very beginning, of the nature and cause of the accusation against him, in order to enable him to prepare for his defence. There are other principles which I might enumerate, not less sacred, presenting an impenetrable shield to protect every citizen falsely charged with a criminal offence. These have been violated in the prosecution instituted by the House of Representatives against the executive branch of the Government. Shall the President alone be deprived of the protection of these great principles, which prevail in every land where a ray of liberty penetrates the gloom of despotism? Shall the Executive alone be deprived of rights which all his fellow-citizens enjoy? The whole proceeding against him justifies the fears of those wise and great men who, before the Constitution was adopted by the

States, apprehended that the tendency of the Government was to the aggrandizement of the legislative at the expense of the executive and judicial departments.

I again declare emphatically that I make this protest for no reason personal to myself; and I do it with perfect respect for the House of Representatives, in which I had the honor of serving as a member for five successive terms. I have lived long in this goodly land, and have enjoyed all the offices and honors which my country could bestow. Amid all the political storms through which I have passed, the present is the first attempt which has ever been made, to my knowledge, to assail my personal or official integrity; and this as the time is approaching when I shall voluntarily retire from the service of my country. I feel proudly conscious that there is no public act of my life which will not bear the strictest scrutiny. I defy all investigation. Nothing but the basest perjury can sully my good name. I do not fear even this, because I cherish an humble confidence that the Gracious Being who has hitherto defended and protected me against the shafts of falsehood and malice will not desert me now, when I have become "old and gray-headed." I can declare, before God and my country, that no human being (with an exception scarcely worthy of notice) has, at any period of my life, dared to approach me with a corrupt or dishonorable proposition; and, until recent developments, it had never entered into my imagination that any person, even in the storm of exasperated political excitement, would charge me, in the most remote degree, with having made such a proposition to any human being. I may now, however, exclaim, in the language of complaint employed by my first and greatest predecessor, that I have been abused "in such exaggerated and indecent terms as could scarcely be applied to a Nero, to a notorious defaulter, or even to a common pickpocket."

I do, therefore, for the reasons stated, and in the name of the people of the several States, solemnly protest against these proceedings of the House of Representatives, because they are in violation of the rights of the coördinate executive branch of the Government, and subversive of its constitutional independence; because they are calculated to foster a band of interested parasites and informers, ever ready, for their own advantage, to swear before *ex parte* committees to pretended private conversations between the President and themselves, incapable, from their nature, of being disproved, thus furnishing material for harrassing him, degrading him in the eyes of the country, and eventually, should he be a weak or a timid man, rendering him subservient to improper influences, in order to avoid such persecutions and annoyances; because they tend to destroy that harmonious action for the common good which ought to be maintained, and which I sincerely desire to cherish between coördinate branches of the Government; and, finally, because, if unresisted, they would establish a precedent dangerous and embarrassing to all my successors, to whatever political party they might be attached.

JAMES BUCHANAN.

WASHINGTON, March 28, 1860.

This message was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, a majority of whom, through their chairman, on the 9th of April, reported resolutions against its constitutional doctrines, which the House adopted on the 8th of June, by a party vote, and the proceedings of the Covode Committee went on until the 16th of that month. Mr. Train, of Massachusetts, one of the committee, then reported to the House a great mass of testimony which had been taken from all sorts of willing witnesses against the President, but without a single resolution accusing or censuring either him or any member of his cabinet. This was, in one sense, as he has himself said, "a triumphant result for the President."\* But the movers in this business had attained their object, in procuring and spreading before the country the means of traducing the President; means which rested for the most part on perjury, and for the residue were colored by personal or political hostility. It was impossible for Mr. Buchanan to allow this to pass without further notice. It is more than probable that the further notice which he took of it prevented a repetition of this kind of proceeding, when, on a future occasion, another President of the United States incurred the hostility of a dominant majority in the House of Representatives. On the 22d of June he sent to the House the following additional message:—

"TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:—

"In my message to the House of Representatives of the 28th March last, I solemnly protested against the creation of a committee, at the head of which was placed my accuser, for the purpose of investigating whether the President had, 'by money, patronage or other improper means, sought to influence the action of Congress, or any committee thereof, for or against the passage of any law appertaining to the rights of any State or Territory.' I protested against this because it was destitute of any specification; because it referred to no particular act to enable the President to prepare for his defence; because it deprived him of the constitutional guards, which, in common with every citizen of the United States, he possesses for his protection; and because it assailed his constitutional independence as a coördinate branch of the Government. There is an enlightened justice, as well as a beautiful symmetry, in every part of the Constitution. This is conspicuously manifested in regard to impeachments. The House of Representatives possesses 'the sole power of

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\* Buchanan's Defence, p. 248.



impeachment;' the Senate 'the sole power to try all impeachments;' and the impeachable offences are 'treason, bribery, or other high crimes or misdemeanors.' The practice of the House, from the earliest times, had been in accordance with its own dignity, the rights of the accused, and the demands of justice. At the commencement of each judicial investigation which might lead to an impeachment, specific charges were always preferred; the accused had an opportunity of cross-examining the witnesses, and he was placed in full possession of the precise nature of the offence which he had to meet. An impartial and elevated standing committee was charged with this investigation, upon which no member inspired with the ancient sense of honor and justice would have served, had he ever expressed an opinion against the accused. Until the present occasion, it was never deemed proper to transform the accuser into the judge, and to confer upon him the selection of his own committee.

"The charges made against me, in vague and general terms, were of such a false and atrocious character, that I did not entertain a moment's apprehension for the result. They were abhorrent to every principle instilled into me from my youth, and every practice of my life, and I did not believe it possible that the man existed who would so basely perjure himself as to swear to the truth of any such accusations. In this conviction I am informed I have not been mistaken. In my former protest, therefore, I truly and emphatically declared that it was made for no reason personal to myself, but because the proceedings of the House were in violation of the rights of the coördinate executive branch of the Government, subversive of its constitutional independence, and, if unresisted, would establish a precedent dangerous and embarrassing to all my successors. Notwithstanding all this, if the committee had not transcended the authority conferred upon it by the resolution of the House of Representatives, broad and general as this was, I should have remained silent upon the subject. What I now charge is, that they have acted as though they possessed unlimited power, and, without any warrant whatever in the resolution under which they were appointed, have pursued a course not merely at war with the constitutional rights of the Executive, but tending to degrade the presidential office itself to such a degree as to render it unworthy of the acceptance of any man of honor or principle.

"The resolution of the House, so far as it is accusatory of the President, is confined to an inquiry whether he had used corrupt or improper means to influence the action of Congress or any of its committees on legislative measures pending before them. Nothing more, nothing less. I have not learned through the newspapers, or in any other mode, that the committee have touched the other accusatory branch of the resolution, charging the President with a violation of duty in failing to execute some law or laws. This branch of the resolution is therefore out of the question. By what authority, then, have the committee undertaken to investigate the course of the President in regard to the convention which framed the Lecompton constitution? By what authority have they undertaken to pry into our foreign relations, for the

purpose of assailing him on account of the instructions given by the Secretary of State to our minister in Mexico, relative to the Tehuantepec route? By what authority have they inquired into the causes of removal from office, and this from the parties themselves removed, with a view to prejudice his character, notwithstanding this power of removal belongs exclusively to the President under the Constitution, was so decided by the first Congress in the year 1789, and has accordingly ever since been exercised? There is in the resolution no pretext of authority for the committee to investigate the question of the printing of the post-office blanks, nor is it to be supposed that the House, if asked, would have granted such an authority, because this question had been previously committed to two other committees—one in the Senate and the other in the House. Notwithstanding this absolute want of power, the committee rushed into this investigation in advance of all other subjects.

The committee proceeded for months, from March 22d, 1860, to examine *ex parte*, and without any notice to myself, into every subject which could possibly affect my character. Interested and vindictive witnesses were summoned and examined before them; and the first and only information of their testimony which, in almost every instance, I received, was obtained from the publication of such portions of it as could injuriously affect myself, in the New York journals. It mattered not that these statements were, so far as I have learned, disproved by the most respectable witnesses who happened to be on the spot. The telegraph was silent respecting these contradictions. It was a secret committee in regard to all the testimony which could by possibility reflect on my character. The poison was left to produce its effect upon the public mind, whilst the antidote was carefully withheld.

"In their examinations the committee violated the most sacred and honorable confidences existing among men. Private correspondence, which a truly honorable man would never even entertain a distant thought of divulging, was dragged to light. Different persons in official and confidential relations with myself, and with whom it was supposed I might have held conversations, the revelation of which would do me injury, were examined. Even members of the Senate and members of my own cabinet, both my constitutional advisers, were called upon to testify, for the purpose of discovering something, if possible, to my discredit.

"The distribution of the patronage of the Government is by far the most disagreeable duty of the President. Applicants are so numerous, and their applications are pressed with such eagerness by their friends both in and out of Congress, that the selection of one for any desirable office gives offence to many. Disappointed applicants, removed officers, and those who for any cause, real or imaginary, had become hostile to the administration, presented themselves, or were invited by a summons to appear before the committee. These are the most dangerous witnesses. Even with the best intentions, they are so influenced by prejudice and disappointment, that they almost inevitably discolor truth. They swear to their own version of private conversations with the President without the possibility of contradiction. His lips are sealed

and he is left at their mercy. He cannot, as a coördinate branch of the Government, appear before a committee of investigation to contradict the oaths of such witnesses. Every coward knows that he can employ insulting language against the President with impunity, and every false or prejudiced witness can attempt to swear away his character before such a committee without the fear of contradiction.

"Thus for months, whilst doing my best at one end of the avenue to perform my high and responsible duties to the country, has there been a committee of the House of Representatives in session at the other end of the avenue, spreading a drag-net, without the shadow of authority from the House, over the whole Union, to catch any disappointed man willing to malign my character, and all this in secret conclave. The lion's mouth at Venice, into which secret denunciations were dropped, is an apt illustration of the Covode committee. The Star Chamber, tyrannical and odious as it was, never proceeded in such a manner. For centuries there has been nothing like it in any civilized country, except the revolutionary tribunal of France, in the days of Robespierre. Now, I undertake to state and to prove that should the proceedings of the committee be sanctioned by the House, and become a precedent for future times, the balance of the Constitution will be entirely upset, and there will no longer remain the three coördinate and independent branches of the Government—legislative, executive, and judicial. The worst fears of the patriots and statesmen who framed the Constitution in regard to the usurpations of the legislative on the executive and judicial branches will then be realized. In the language of Mr. Madison, speaking on this very subject, in the forty-eighth number of the *Federalist*: 'In a representative republic, where the executive magistracy is carefully limited both in the extent and duration of its power, and where the legislative power is exercised by an assembly which is inspired by a supposed influence over the people, with an intrepid confidence in its own strength, which is sufficiently numerous to feel all the passions which actuate a multitude, yet not so numerous as to be incapable of pursuing the objects of its passions by means which reason prescribes, it is against the enterprising ambition of this department that the people ought to indulge all their jealousy and exhaust all their precautions.' And in the expressive and pointed language of Mr. Jefferson, when speaking of the tendency of the legislative branch of Government to usurp the rights of the weaker branches: 'The concentrating these in the same hands is precisely the definition of despotic government. It will be no alleviation that these powers will be exercised by a plurality of hands, and not by a single one. One hundred and seventy-three despots would surely be as oppressive as one. Let those who doubt it turn their eyes on the Republic of Venice. As little will it avail us that they are chosen by ourselves. An elective despotism was not the government we fought for, but one which should not only be founded on free principles, but in which the powers of government should be so divided and balanced among several bodies of magistracy, as that no one could transcend their legal limits without being effectually checked and controlled by the others.'

"Should the proceedings of the Covode committee become a precedent, both the letter and spirit of the Constitution will be violated. One of the three massive columns on which the whole superstructure rests will be broken down. Instead of the Executive being a coördinate, it will become a subordinate branch of the Government. The presidential office will be dragged into the dust. The House of Representatives will then have rendered the Executive almost necessarily subservient to its wishes, instead of being independent. How is it possible that two powers in the State can be coördinate and independent of each other, if the one claims and exercises the power to reprove and to censure all the official acts and all the private conversations of the other, and this upon *ex parte* testimony before a secret inquisitorial committee—in short, to assume a general censorship over the others? The idea is as absurd in public as it would be in private life. Should the President attempt to assert and maintain his own independence, future Covode committees may dragoon him into submission by collecting the hosts of disappointed office-hunters, removed officers, and those who desire to live upon the public treasury, which must follow in the wake of every administration, and they, in secret conclave, will swear away his reputation. Under such circumstances, he must be a very bold man should he not surrender at discretion and consent to exercise his authority according to the will of those invested with this terrific power. The sovereign people of the several States have elected him to the highest and most honorable office in the world. He is their only direct representative in the Government. By their Constitution they have made him commander-in-chief of their army and navy. He represents them in their intercourse with foreign nations. Clothed with their dignity and authority, he occupies a proud position before all nations, civilized and savage. With the consent of the Senate, he appoints all the important officers of the Government. He exercises the veto power, and to that extent controls the legislation of Congress. For the performance of these high duties he is responsible to the people of the several States, and not in any degree to the House of Representatives.

"Shall he surrender these high powers, conferred upon him as the representative of the American people, for their benefit, to the House, to be exercised under their overshadowing influence and control! Shall he alone of all the citizens of the United States be denied a fair trial? Shall he alone not be 'informed of the nature and cause of the accusation' against him? Shall he alone not 'be confronted with the witnesses' against him? Shall the House of Representatives, usurping the powers of the Senate, proceed to try the President through the agency of a secret committee of the body where it is impossible he can make any defence, and then, without affording him an opportunity of being heard, pronounce a judgment of censure against him? The very same rule might be applied, for the very same reason, to every judge of every court in the United States. From what part of the Constitution is this terrible inquisitorial power derived? No such express power exists. From which of the enumerated powers can it be inferred? It is true the House cannot pronounce the formal judgment against him of 'removal

from office," but they can, by their judgment of censure, asperse his reputation, and thus, to the extent of their influence, render the office contemptible. An example is at hand of the reckless manner in which this power of censure can be employed in high party times. The House, on a recent occasion, have attempted to degrade the President by adopting the resolution of Mr. John Sherman, declaring that he, in conjunction with the Secretary of the Navy, "by receiving and considering the party relations of bidders for contracts, and the effect of awarding contracts upon pending elections, have set an example dangerous to the public safety, and deserving the reproof of this House."

It will scarcely be credited that the sole pretext for this vote of censure was the simple fact that in disposing of the numerous letters of every imaginable character which I daily receive, I had, in the usual course of business, referred a letter from Colonel Patterson, of Philadelphia, in relation to a contract, to the attention of the Secretary of the Navy, the head of the appropriate department, without expressing or intimating any opinion whatever on the subject; and to make the matter, if possible, still plainer, the Secretary had informed the committee that "*the President did not in any manner interfere in this case, nor has he in any other case of contract since I have been in the department.*" The absence of all proof to sustain this attempt to degrade the President, whilst it manifests the venom of the shaft aimed at him, has destroyed the vigor of the bow.

To return, after this digression. Should the House, by the institution of Covode committees, votes of censure, and other devices to harass the President, reduce him to subservience to their will, and render him their creature, then the well-balanced Government which our fathers framed will be annihilated. This conflict has already been commenced in earnest by the House against the Executive. A bad precedent rarely if ever dies. It will, I fear, be pursued in the time of my successors, no matter what may be their political character. Should secret committees be appointed with unlimited authority to range over all the words and actions, and, if possible, the very thoughts of the President, with a view to discover something in his past life prejudicial to his character, from parasites and informers, this would be an ordeal which scarcely any mere man since the fall could endure. It would be to subject him to a reign of terror from which the stoutest and purest hearts might shrink. I have passed triumphantly through this ordeal. My vindication is complete. The committee have reported no resolution looking to an impeachment against me, no resolution of censure, not even a resolution pointing out any abuses in any of the executive departments of the Government to be corrected by legislation. This is the highest commendation which could be bestowed on the heads of these departments. The sovereign people of the States will, however, I trust, save my successors, whoever they may be, from any such ordeal. They are frank, bold, and honest. They detest delators and informers. I therefore, in the name and as the representative of this great people, and standing upon the ramparts of the Constitution which they

"have ordained and established," do solemnly protest against these unprecedented and unconstitutional proceedings.

There was still another committee raised by the House on the 6th March last, on motion of Mr. Heard, to which I had not the slightest objection. The resolution creating it was confined to specific charges, which I have ever since been ready and willing to meet. I have at all times invited and defied fair investigation upon constitutional principles. I have received no notice that this committee have ever proceeded to the investigation.

Why should the House of Representatives desire to encroach on the other departments of the Government? Their rightful powers are ample for every legitimate purpose. They are the impeaching body. In their legislative capacity it is their most wise and wholesome prerogative to institute rigid examinations into the manner in which all departments of the Government are conducted, with a view to reform abuses, to promote economy, and to improve every branch of the administration. Should they find reason to believe, in the course of their examinations, that any grave offence had been committed by the President or any officer of the Government, rendering it proper, in their judgment, to resort to impeachment, their course would be plain. They would then transfer the question from their legislative to their accusatory jurisdiction, and take care that in all the preliminary judicial proceedings, preparatory to the vote of articles of impeachment, the accused should enjoy the benefit of cross-examining the witnesses, and all the other safeguards with which the Constitution surrounds every American citizen.

If, in a legislative investigation, it should appear that the public interest required the removal of any officer of the Government, no President has ever existed who, after giving him a fair hearing, would hesitate to apply the remedy. This I take to be the ancient and well-established practice. An adherence to it will best promote the harmony and the dignity of the intercourse between the coördinate branches of the Government, and render us all more respectable both in the eyes of our own countrymen and of foreign nations.

JAMES BUCHANAN.

WASHINGTON, June 22, 1860.

This last message was referred to a select committee, with instructions to report at the next session. But no report was ever made, and legislative action on the doings of the "Covode Committee" thus came to an end. But in the country the materials for calumniating the President continued to be used as they were originally designed to be. It will be interesting to know something more of the feelings of Mr. Buchanan on the subject, as expressed in a private letter to the editor and proprietor of a great New York journal.

[TO JAMES GORDON BENNETT, ESQ.]

(Private and Confidential.)

WASHINGTON, June 18th, 1860.

MY DEAR SIR :—

I thought I never should have occasion to appeal to you on any public subject, and I knew if I did, I could not swerve you from your independent course. I therefore now only ask you as a personal friend to take the trouble of examining yourself the proceedings of the Covode Committee and the reports of the majority and minority, and then to do me what you may deem to be justice. That committee were engaged in secret conclave for nearly three months in examining every man, *ex parte*, who, from disappointment or personal malignity, would cast a shade upon the character of the Executive. If this dragooning can exist, the Presidential office would be unworthy of the acceptance of a gentleman.

In performing my duty, I have endeavored to be not only pure but unsuspected. I have never had any concern in awarding contracts, but have left them to be given by the heads of the appropriate departments. I have ever detested all jobs, and no man, at any period of my life, has ever approached me on such a subject. The testimony of —— contains nothing but falsehoods, whether for or against me, for he has sworn all round.

I shall send a message to the House in a few days on the violation of the Constitution involved in the vote of censure and in the appointment and proceedings of the Covode Committee. I am glad to perceive from the *Herald* that you agree with me on the Constitutional question. I shall endeavor to send you a copy in advance.

With my kindest regards to Mrs. Bennett, I remain, very respectfully,  
Your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

## CHAPTER XIII.

SUMMARY OF THE SLAVERY QUESTIONS FROM 1787 TO 1860—THE ANTI-SLAVERY AGITATION IN THE NORTH—GROWTH AND POLITICAL TRIUMPH OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY—FATAL DIVISIONS AMONG THE DEMOCRATS—MR. BUCHANAN DECLINES TO BE REGARDED AS A CANDIDATE FOR A SECOND ELECTION.

AS the reader is now approaching the period when, for the first time in our political history, a President of the United States was elected by the votes of the free States alone, a retrospective view of those events which preceded and contributed to that result is necessary to a correct understanding of the great national schism of 1860-61.

The beginning of the year 1860 found the people of the United States in the enjoyment of as great a measure of prosperity as they had ever known. It was to close with a condition of feeling between the two sections of the Union entirely fatal to its peace and threatening to its perpetuity. In the future of our country there will come a time when our posterity will ask, why should there ever have been any "North" or any "South," in the sense in which those divisions have been marked in so long a period of our national history. When the inquirer learns that from the time of the formation and establishment of the Constitution of the United States, the existence of slavery in certain States was nearly the sole cause of the sectional antagonism typified by those terms, he will have to trace, through various settlements, the successive adjustments of questions which related to this one dangerous and irritating subject.

This portion of our national history is divided into distinct stages, at each of which some thing intended to be definite and final was reached. It is also filled by the disastrous influence of causes which unsettled what had once been determined as a



series of compacts between the sections ; causes which continued to operate until the year that witnessed the beginning of a great catastrophe.

The Constitution of the United States, so far as it related in any way to the condition of slavery, was the result of agreements and adjustments between the Northern and the Southern States, which have been called "compromises." It is not material to the present purpose to consider either the moral justification for these arrangements, or whether there was an equality or an inequality as between the two sections, in what they respectively gained or conceded. Both sections gained the Union of the whole country under a system of government better adapted to secure its welfare and happiness than it had known before ; and what this system promised was abundantly fulfilled. The precise equivalent which the Southern States received, by the settlement made in the formation of the Constitution, was the recognition of slavery as a condition of portions of their population by a right exclusively dependent upon their own local law, and exclusively under their own control as a right of property ; and to this right of property was annexed a stipulation that the master might follow his slave from the State whence he had escaped into any other State, and require him to be given up, even if the law of that other State did not recognize the condition of servitude. One other concession was made by the Northern States : that although the slaves of the Southern States were regarded as property, they should be so far considered as persons as to be reckoned in a certain ratio in fixing the basis of representation in the popular branch of Congress, and by consequence in fixing the electoral vote of the State in the choice of a President of the United States. The special equivalent which the Northern States received for these concessions was in the establishment of what is called "the commercial power," or the power of Congress to regulate for the whole country the trade with foreign nations and between the States ; a power which it was foreseen was to be one of vast importance, which was one of the chief objects for which the new Union was to be formed, and which proved in the event to be all, and more than all, that had been anticipated for it. Viewed in the light of mutual stipulations, these so-called

“compromises” between the two sections were laid at the basis of the Constitution, forming a settlement fixed in the supreme law of the land, and therefore determinate and final.

Contemporaneously with the formation of the Constitution, and before its adoption, the Congress of the Confederation was engaged in framing an ordinance for the government of the Northwestern Territory, a region of country north and west of the Ohio, which Virginia and other States had ceded to the United States during the war of the revolution. From this region the ordinance excluded slavery by an agreement made in that Congress between the Northern and the Southern States. The Constitution did not take notice of this Northwestern Territory by its specific designation, but it was made to embrace a provision empowering the new Congress “to make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory and all other property of the United States,” and also a provision for the admission into the Union of new States, to be formed out of any territory belonging to the United States. For a long period after the adoption of the Constitution, these two provisions, taken together, were regarded as establishing a plenary power of legislation over the internal condition of any territory that might in any way become the property of the United States, while it remained subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of Congress, and down to the time when its inhabitants were to be permitted to form themselves into a State that was to be admitted into the Union upon an equality with all the other States. Under this process, between the years 1792 and 1820, nine new States were admitted into the Union; five of them with slavery and four of them without it. Of these, three were formed out of parts of the Northwestern Territory, and they therefore derived their character as free States from the admitted force of the ordinance of 1787; while the others were not within the scope of that ordinance, but derived their character from the legislative authority of Congress under the Constitution.

It was not until the year 1820 that this recognized practice of admitting a State into the Union as a free or as a slave State, according to the character of its early settlement, and the legislation which governed the Territorial condition, incurred any serious danger of interruption. But in that year, Missouri,

which was a part of the territory ceded in 1803 by France to the United States under the name of Louisiana, was in a condition to seek admission into the Union. Slavery had existed there from the first settlement of the country, and when it became necessary to authorize the free inhabitants to form a State constitution, preparatory to admission into the Union, it was certain that, if left to themselves, they would not abolish a domestic relation that had long existed among them, and in which no inconsiderable part of their wealth was involved. It was proposed to require them to abolish it, as a condition precedent to the admission of the State into the Union. On this so-called "Missouri Restriction," a violent sectional struggle ensued in Congress, which ended in what has since been known as the "Missouri Compromise." This was embodied in the organic act, passed on the 6th of March, 1820, which authorized the people of the then Territory of Missouri to form a State constitution and government. The compromise consisted, on the one hand, in the omission of the proposed restriction as a condition of admission into the Union, and, on the other hand, in a guarantee of perpetual freedom throughout all the remainder of the Louisiana territory lying north of the parallel of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ . This was accompanied, however, by a proviso, which saved the right to reclaim any person escaping into that region, from whom labor or service was lawfully claimed in any State or Territory of the United States. The parallel of  $36^{\circ} 30'$  was adopted as the line north of which slavery or involuntary servitude might not be permitted to exist as an institution or condition recognized by the local law, because it was assumed as a practical fact that north of that line the slavery of the African race could not, from the nature of the climate, be profitably introduced, whilst it was equally assumed that in those portions of the Louisiana purchase south of that line, the habits of the contiguous States, and the character of the climate would induce a settlement by persons accustomed to hold and depend upon that species of labor in the cultivation of the soil, and in the wants of domestic life. The principle of the Missouri Compromise, therefore, as a final settlement made between the two sections of the Union in respect to the whole of the Louisiana purchase, was that north of the parallel of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ , slavery could never be

introduced, but that south of that line, slavery might be established according to the will of the free inhabitants. Regarded in the light of a division of this vast territory, this compromise secured to the North quite as much as, if not more than, it secured to the South. Regarded in the light of a settlement of a dangerous and exciting controversy, on which the whole Union could repose, the Missouri Compromise disposed of the future character of all the territory then belonging to the United States, not including the Northwestern Territory, the character of which was fixed by the ordinance of 1787. For a quarter of a century afterward, the two sections of North and South rested in peace upon the settlement of 1820, so far as discussion of the subject of slavery in the halls of Congress could be induced by the application of new States to be admitted into the Union. But in 1845, when Texas, a foreign, an independent, and a slave State, was annexed to the Union, the subject of an increase in the number of slave States came again into discussion, in which angry sectional feeling was carried to a dangerous point. Texas was finally admitted into the Union as a slaveholding State, with a right to divide herself into four new States, with or without slavery; but one of the express conditions of the annexation was a recognition of the Missouri Compromise line, so that north of that line no new State could be framed out of any portion of Texas unless slavery should be excluded from it. The wisdom and policy of the Missouri Compromise were thus again recognized, and it remained undisturbed for a period of thirty-four years from the time of its enactment, as a covenant of peace between the North and the South.

The war between the United States and Mexico, which was terminated by the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, in 1848, resulted in the acquisition by the United States of a vast region of country which was not embraced by the Missouri Compromise. At the time of this acquisition, Mr. Buchanan earnestly advocated the extension of the line of  $36^{\circ} 30'$  through the whole of this new territory to the Pacific Ocean, as the best mode of adjustment.

It is not necessary in this historical sketch to dwell on the advantages or disadvantages of this plan. All that needs to be said about it here is, that it commended itself to Mr. Buchanan

as a plan more acceptable to the people of both sections of the Union than any other that could be devised. It was defeated by the proposal of the so-called "Wilmot Proviso," which aimed to exclude slavery from all possible introduction into any part of this newly acquired territory, without regard to the principle of division which was the characteristic of the Missouri Compromise, and without recognizing any claim of the slaveholding States to an equal enjoyment of the common territory of the Union, in the manner in which they asserted that claim. The Southern claim was that of a right to emigrate into any Territory of the United States, with slaves, as part of the property of the emigrant, just as a Northern man could emigrate into such a Territory with whatever personal property he chose to take with him. When, therefore, the admission of California as a State, and the organization of Territorial governments for the other provinces of Mexico that had been ceded to the United States came before Congress, they came accompanied by a great sectional excitement, that was partly due to the anti-slavery agitation that had been going on in the North, and partly to the struggle for an increase of the political power of the free States on the one side, and of the slave States on the other, according as the future character of these new acquisitions might be determined.

Having now reached the year 1850, the reader stands at a period at which the character of freedom had been long impressed upon the whole of the Northwestern Territories; at which the character of the whole region of the Louisiana purchase had been for thirty years determined by the principle of the Missouri Compromise; and at which, what remained to be done was to adjust, by a final settlement, the future character of the territory acquired from Mexico, and to act upon any other questions concerning slavery that demanded and admitted legislation by Congress. There were two such questions that did not relate to the newly acquired territory. One of these concerned the toleration of the domestic slave trade in the District of Columbia, the abolition of which was loudly demanded by the North. The other related to a Southern demand of a more efficient law for the extradition of fugitives from service.

The Thirty-first Congress, assembled in December, 1849, was the one which enacted the series of measures known as the "Compromise of 1850," and which settled all the slavery questions that remained for adjustment. In respect to the territory that had been acquired from Mexico, there was danger for a time that all harmony of action would be frustrated by the so-called "Wilmot Proviso," which aimed to impose as a fundamental condition of any legislation respecting any part of that territory, a perpetual exclusion of slavery. Mr. Buchanan was out of public office at this time, but his influence was exerted in his own State, with success, to prevent the passage by her legislature of instructing resolutions in favor of that proviso. This led the way for its rejection by Congress. On the 4th of February, 1850, resolutions favoring the proviso were laid upon the table of the House of Representatives in Congress, by the vote of 105 to 75. This important vote was followed in the Senate by five measures, designed by Mr. Clay and supported by Mr. Webster and Mr. Calhoun, which, after a long discussion, became laws in September, 1850, with the general concurrence of both the Whig and the Democratic parties. The first of these Acts consisted of a new and more efficient law for the extradition of fugitives from service, to take the place of the old law of February 12th, 1793, which bore the signature of Washington. By reason of a decision of the Supreme Court, made in 1842, which had determined that Congress could not constitutionally require State magistrates to perform a duty which the Court declared to be one pertaining exclusively to the Federal power, the law of 1793 had become almost inoperative. Although the decision of the Court left the States at liberty to allow their magistrates to act in such cases, many of the Northern States had passed laws to prohibit them from rendering any official aid to the claimant of a fugitive from service. It had become necessary, therefore, for Congress to provide officers of Federal appointment to execute an express mandate of the Federal Constitution. This was the purpose of the new law of 1850.

The second of these "compromise measures" was an Act for the immediate admission of California into the Union, as a free State, embracing its whole territory, both south and north of

the line of the Missouri Compromise. The third and fourth measures were Acts for the establishment of Territorial governments in New Mexico and Utah, which secured to them respectively the right of admission as States into the Union, "with or without slavery as their respective constitutions might require." The Act relating to New Mexico declared that "no citizen of the United States shall be deprived of his life, liberty or property in said Territory, except by the judgment of his peers and the laws of the land;" thus making, from abundant caution, a provision of the Federal Constitution obligatory upon the Territorial legislature. Thus these two Acts, along with the Missouri Compromise, comprehended all the territory belonging to the United States, whether derived from Mexico or from France; there was no territory remaining for the Wilmot Proviso to act upon, and consequently the agitation of that proviso was excluded from the halls of Congress. Moreover, the Act for establishing the Territory of New Mexico withdrew from the jurisdiction of a slave State all that portion of Texas which lay north of the parallel of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ , by including it within the boundary of New Mexico. The fifth of the compromise measures of 1850 was a law abolishing the domestic slave trade within the District of Columbia.

It is not singular that a final settlement, which disposed of all the slavery questions on which Congress could in any way act, should have been acceptable to the people of the whole Union, excepting the extremists of the two sections. The abolitionists of the North denounced it, because it admitted of the possible and theoretical establishment of slavery in New Mexico, notwithstanding the patent fact that neither the soil nor the climate of that region could ever make it a profitable form of labor, and because it recognized and provided for the execution of that provision of the Constitution which required the extradition of fugitives from service. The extreme men of the South disliked the settlement, because it admitted the great and rich State of California as a free State. But when the Presidential election of 1852 approached, the general approval of this settlement was made manifest. The national convention of the Whig party nominated as its candidate for the Presidency General Scott, who was supposed to be somewhat closely affiliated, both personally and politically, with public men who opposed and

continued to denounce the compromise. But in their "platform" the Whigs pledged themselves to maintain it as a binding settlement, and to discountenance all attempts in or out of Congress to disturb it. The Democratic national convention not only made equally emphatic declarations of their purpose to maintain this settlement inviolate, but by nominating a candidate who could not be suspected of any lukewarmness on this, the great political question of the time, they secured a majority of the electoral votes of both free and slave States that was almost unprecedented. General Pierce received 254 electoral votes out of 296, or 105 votes more than were necessary to a choice. All the free States, excepting Massachusetts and Vermont, and all the slave States, excepting Kentucky and Tennessee, gave him their electoral votes. Never did a party come into power with greater strength, and never was there a more distinct political issue than that which placed General Pierce at the head of the Government. The people at large distrusted the soundness of the Whig candidate and his friends upon the compromise of 1850, and being determined to maintain that settlement as final, and to have no more agitation of slavery questions in Congress, they entrusted the destinies of the country to the Democratic party.

But as not infrequently happens, the Democrats were in a majority so large that it became unwieldy; and before the administration of General Pierce had closed, a step was taken that was to lead to the most serious consequences. This step was the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. The settlement, or "compromise" of 1850, made by the consentaneous action of the North and the South, rested, as on a corner stone, upon the inviolable character of the settlement of 1820, known as the Missouri Compromise. To preserve that earlier compromise intact, was to preserve the later one; for if the settlement made in 1820 in regard to all the territory derived from France should be renounced, the door would be open for the renunciation of the settlement made in 1850 respecting New Mexico and Utah. Sweep away the compact which dedicated the whole Louisiana territory north of  $36^{\circ} 30'$  to perpetual freedom, and which gave to the South whatever parts of it below that line might be adapted to slave labor, and all Territories everywhere would be



subject to a new contention over the dogma that slavery did or that it did not go into every Territory by virtue of a right derived from the Constitution of the United States. There was no security for the peace and harmony of the country, but to act upon the principle that the settlement of 1850 rested for its foundation upon the inviolable character and perpetual duration of the settlement of 1820.

But in all free countries governed by political parties, and especially at times when the party in power is in an extraordinary majority, there are always men who feel that they are wiser than others, and who are apt to couple their own aims as statesmen, looking to the highest honors of their country, with new plans for the management of public affairs. Such a man was the late Stephen A. Douglas, a Senator in Congress from the State of Illinois from 1847 until his death, in 1861; a distinguished leader of the Democratic party, who had been several times a candidate for the nomination by his party to the Presidency. This very able man, who had a considerable body of friends attached to him from his energetic and somewhat imperious qualities, had been a strenuous supporter of the Compromise of 1850, and had rendered very efficient service in the adoption of that settlement. He seems to have been somewhat suddenly led, in 1854, to the adoption of the idea that it would be wise to repeal the Missouri Compromise, and that in its place might be substituted a doctrine that the people of a Territory have the same right and ought to have the same sovereign power, while in the Territorial condition, to shape their domestic institutions in their own way, as the people of a State. He does not appear to have had the foresight to see that the practical application of this doctrine would lead, in the circumstances of the country, to a sectional struggle for the possession and political dominion of a Territory, between slaveholders and non-slaveholders, without the superintending and controlling authority of Congress to prevent such a conflict by determining the character of the Territory one way or the other. As he could not remove the Missouri settlement without attacking the constitutional power of Congress to legislate as it might see fit on the condition of a Territory, he boldly determined to make that attack, and to put in the

place of the authority of Congress the doctrine of "popular sovereignty" as a substitute for Congressional legislation on the relations of master and slave. When this ill-advised legislation, which tended in the most direct manner to concentrate into political organization the Northern dislike of slavery, received the sanction of the President, General Pierce, on the 30th of May, 1854, Mr. Buchanan was out of the country. He never approved of it, and had he been at home, it is quite certain that it would have encountered his strenuous opposition.

Turning now aside from the history of these successive settlements, and the modes in which they were unsettled, in order to appreciate the condition of feeling between the two sections of the Union at the time when the election of Mr. Lincoln to the Presidency was effected exclusively by the electoral votes of the free States, the reader should learn something of the history of the anti-slavery agitation in the North; something of the effort to extend the political power of the slave States as a barrier against anticipated encroachments upon Southern rights; and something of the causes which led to the assertion of the supposed right of State secession from the Union, as a remedy against dangers apprehended to be in store for the people of the South.

By the universal admission of all persons, whatever were their sentiments or feelings concerning slavery, the Constitution of the United States conferred no power upon Congress to act on it in any State of the Union. This was as much acknowledged by the early abolitionists as by all other men. They regarded the Constitution as a "pro-slavery" instrument. They admitted that the supreme law of the land recognized and to a certain extent upheld the principle that slaves were property; and they therefore sought for a justification of their attacks upon the Constitution in what they denominated the "higher law," which meant that when the individual citizen believes that the moral law is in conflict with the law of the land, the latter cannot rightfully bind his conscience or restrain his conduct. Proclaiming it to be sinful to live in a political confederacy which tolerated slavery anywhere within its limits, they began by denouncing the Constitution as a "league with death and a covenant with hell;" and it was not long before this doctrine of the higher law was preached from pulpits and

disseminated by numerous publications in the New England States. The dates of the organized anti-slavery societies are important to be observed, because of the spontaneous movement in Virginia towards the removal of slavery which shortly preceded them. The New England Anti-slavery Society was organized in Boston, on the 30th of January, 1832; the New York Society in October, 1833; and the National Society at Philadelphia in December, 1833. Affiliated local societies of the same kind sprang up at once in many towns and villages of the North. At the time when these organizations were first gathered, and for a long period thereafter, there was no pending question upon the subject of the extension of slavery into Territories of the United States. The country had been reposing since 1820 upon the Missouri settlement; it was not until 1845 that any addition of slave territory was threatened; and at the moment when the first anti-slavery society was organized in Boston, Virginia was on the verge of emancipating her slaves. Accordingly, the nature, purposes and methods of the Northern anti-slavery agitation between the year 1832 and the annexation of Texas in 1845, and thence to the year 1860, form a most important subject of political study.

The founders of the Northern anti-slavery societies, while taking their stand in opposition to the Constitution, had yet, in all that they asked Congress to do, to address themselves to a public body every member of which had taken an oath to support that instrument. In their own communities, those who carried on the agitation could appeal to the emotional natures of men, women and children upon the wrongs and the sin of slavery, and fill them with hatred of the slaveholder, without discriminating between questions on which the citizens of a non-slaveholding State could and those on which they could not legitimately act. A great moral force of abhorrence of slavery could thus be, and in fact was, in process of time accumulated. This force expended itself in two ways; first, in supplying to the managers of the agitation the means of sending into the Southern States, pamphlets, newspapers and pictorial representations setting forth the wrongs and cruelties of slavery. For this purpose, the mails of the United States had, by the year 1835, been so much used for the circulation in the South of

matter which was there regarded as incendiary and calculated to promote servile insurrections, that President Jackson deemed it to be his duty to propose legislation to arrest such abuses of the post office. Congress did not adopt his recommendation, and the abuse remained unchecked.\* Another mode in which the anti-slavery agitation expended itself was in petitions to Congress. During the session of 1835-6, and for several of the following years, Congress was flooded with what were called "abolition petitions." On some of them Congress could legitimately act: such as those which prayed for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, and in the forts, arsenals, and dock-yards of the United States situated in slaveholding States. On others, which petitioned for a dissolution of the Union on account of the existence of slavery in some of the States, or for action on the subject of slavery in general, Congress of course could do nothing. A question arose whether such petitions could be received at all, which led to a very memorable and a very excited discussion of the right of petition. Not only was a large part of the time of Congress taken up with these topics, but the opposing representatives of the two sections were guilty of excesses in crimination and recrimination, which foreshadowed the formation of two geographical parties, one Northern and the other Southern, having nothing but slavery as the cause of their division.

One of the questions to which those who are to come after us will seek for an answer, will be, what was the justification for this anti-slavery agitation, begun in 1832 and continued for a period of about ten years, during which there was no special effort on the part of the South to extend the area of slavery? What, again, was the unquestionable effect of this agitation in producing a revulsion of feeling on the whole subject of slavery among the slaveholders themselves? Was the time propitious for the accomplishment of any good? Were the mode, the method, and the spirit of the agitation such as men would resort to, who had a just and comprehensive sense of the limitations upon human responsibility?

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\* See the message of President Jackson, December 3, 1835. It is not intended in the text to express any opinion whether the abuse could or could not have been restrained in the way proposed. The fact that the President of the United States deemed it his duty to make this recommendation attests the character of the abuse which he sought to remedy.

The time was most unfortunate. The Southern conscience did not then need to be quickened or enlightened on the inherent wrong of African slavery; nor did it need to be told that the system was one that inflicted many evils upon society. Plans of emancipation, which the Southerners themselves were far better fitted to form than any one who was a stranger to their social condition, had already begun to be considered by enlightened men in more than one of the older Southern States. All that could be done by others who were beyond their limits, to aid them in any aspect of the subject, was limited by just such restraints as apply to any evil existing in a community to which it is confined, and on which strangers can offer nothing but the most considerate and temperate discussion of remedies originating among those who have the burthen to bear. The grand error of our early abolitionists was that they would not observe the limitations of human duty. They were either citizens or residents of non-slaveholding States. Foreigners, in respect to this matter, to the States in which slavery existed, they carried on their discussions, publications and organizations in communities whose public opinion could have but an extremely narrow and subordinate right to act on the subject at all. They either disregarded the fact that the Constitution of the United States could never have been established if it had not recognized the exclusive right of each Southern State to govern the relation of master and slave—nay, that the foreign slave trade without that Constitution could not have been ended when it was, if at all—or else they denounced the Constitution as an emanation from the bottomless pit. Grant that the relation of servitude was a moral wrong, that the idea that man can hold property in man was repugnant to the law of nature or the law of God; grant that the political system of the Union, as our fathers made it, ought to have been reformed by their descendants;—were there no moral restraints resting upon those who enjoyed the advantages and blessings of a Union which had been purchased by certain concessions to the slaveholder? Did not the Constitution itself provide for regular and peaceful changes which the progress of society and the growing philanthropy of the age might find to be necessary to the fuller practical development of the great truths of

liberty? Was there no way to deal with slavery but to attack the slaveholder as a sinner, stained with the deepest of crimes against God and his fellow-men? Was there nothing to be done to aid him in ridding himself of the burthen of his sin, by discussing with him the economical problems of his situation? Was it necessary for strangers to demand instant and unqualified manumission, regardless of what was to follow? Was it necessary to assail the Constitution as an unholy covenant with sin, and, rejecting its restraints, to disregard the wisdom that takes human nature as it is, that is careful not to provoke reaction, that looks before and after, and shapes its measures with a rational forecast of their adaptation to the end?

Whilst it is not to be denied that our "Abolitionists" were men of a certain kind of courage developed into rashness, of unbounded zeal, of singular energy, of persistent consistency with their own principles of action, and of that fanatical force which is derived from the incessant contemplation of one idea to the exclusion of all others, it must nevertheless be said that they were not statesmen. There was no one among them of whom it can be said that he acted with a statesmanlike comprehension of the difficulties of this great subject, or with a statesman's regard for the limitations on individual conduct. Their situation was very different from that of the public or private men in England, who gallantly led the early crusade against the slave trade, or of those who afterwards brought about emancipation in the British colonies. Whatever Parliament thought fit to do in regard to slavery under the British flag or in the British dominions, it had ample power to do, and what Parliament might be made to do, was for the nation to determine. An English statesman or philanthropist had, in either character, no constitutional restraints to consider. He had to deal with both moral and economical questions, and he could deal freely with either. He could use argument, persuasion, invective, or denunciation, and he could not be told by the Jamaica slaveholder, you have entered into a solemn public compact with me which secures to me the exclusive cognizance of this domestic relation, and by that compact you purchased the very existence of the general government under which we both live. But a citizen of the United States, or a foreigner,

taking his stand in a free State, stirring up popular hatred of the slaveholder, sending into the Southern States publications which were there regarded as incendiary, persuading legislative bodies in the North to act against one of the express conditions of the Federal Union, and renouncing all Christian fellowship with Southern churches, surely violated the spirit and in some respects the letter of the Constitution. He provoked a sudden revulsion of feeling in the South, and brought about a state of opinion which aimed to maintain slavery by texts of scripture, by the examples of other nations, by the teachings of Christ and his apostles, by the assumed relations of races, by the supposed laws of public economy, and the alleged requirements of a southern clime. He promoted, by an effect as inevitable as the nature of man, a purpose to defend slavery through an increase of its political power, to which a multiplication of slave States would make a large addition. He thus sowed the wind, and left to another generation to reap the whirlwind.

These assertions must not be left unsupported by proof, and the proof is at hand. In all periods of our history, prior to the civil war, Virginia exercised great influence over the whole slaveholding region. I have said that she was on the verge of emancipation when the first anti-slavery society was organized in the North; and although half a century has since elapsed, there are those living who, like myself, can recollect that she was so. But to others the fact must be attested by proof. It may be asserted as positively as anything in history that, in the year 1832, there was nowhere in the world a more enlightened sense of the wrong and the evil of slavery, than there was among the public men and the people of Virginia. The movement against it was spontaneous. It reached the general assembly by petitions which evinced that the policy and justice of emancipation had taken a strong hold on the convictions of portions of the people of the State, whom no external influence had then reached, and who, therefore, had free scope. Any Virginian could place himself at the head of this movement without incurring hostility or jealousy, and it was a grandson of Jefferson, Mr. Jefferson Randolph, by whom the leading part in it was assumed.

Mr. Randolph represented in the assembly the county of Albemarle, which was one of the largest slaveholding counties

of the State. He brought forward a bill to accomplish a gradual emancipation. It was debated with the freedom of men who, undisturbed by external pressure, were dealing with a matter of purely domestic concern. No member of the house defended slavery, for the day had not come when Southern men were to learn that it was a blessing, because those who knew nothing of its burthens told them that it was a curse. There could be nothing said anywhere, there had been nothing said out of Virginia, stronger and truer, in depicting the evils of slavery, than was said in that discussion by Virginia gentlemen, debating in their own legislature a matter that concerned themselves and their people. But finding that the house was not prepared for immediate action on so momentous a subject, Mr. Randolph did not press his bill to a vote. A resolution, however, was adopted, by a vote of 65 to 58, which shows what was the condition of the public sentiment of Virginia at that moment. It declared, as the sense of the house, "that they were profoundly sensible of the great evils arising from the condition of the colored population of the commonwealth, and were induced by policy, as well as humanity, to attempt the immediate removal of the free negroes; but that further action for the removal of the slaves should await a more definite development of public opinion."

Mr. Randolph was again elected by his constituents, upon this special question. But in the mean time came suddenly the intelligence of what was doing at the North. It came in an alarming aspect for the peace and security of the whole South; since it could not be possible that strangers should combine together to assail the slaveholder as a sinner and to demand his instant admission of his guilt, without arousing fears of the most dangerous consequences for the safety of Southern homes, as well as intense indignation against such an unwarrantable interference. From that time forth, emancipation, whether immediate or gradual, could not be considered in Virginia or anywhere else in the South. Public attention became instantly fixed upon the means of resisting this external and unjustifiable intermeddling with a matter that did not concern those who intermeddled. A sudden revulsion of public sentiment in Virginia was followed by a similar revulsion wherever Southern



men had begun to consider for themselves what could be done for the amelioration of the condition of the colored race and for ultimate emancipation. As the Northern agitation went on, increasing in bitterness and gathering new forces, Southern statesmen cast about for new devices to strengthen the political power of their section in the Federal Government. These devices are to be traced to the anti-slavery agitation in the North as their exciting cause, as distinctly as anything whatever in the history of sectional feeling can be traced back from an effect to a cause which has produced it.

But this was not the whole of the evil produced by the anti-slavery agitation. It prevented all consideration by the higher class of Northern statesmen of any method of action by which the people of the free States could aid their Southern brethren in removing slavery; and it presented to Northern politicians of the inferior order a local field for cultivating popularity, as the excitement went on increasing in violence and swept into its vortex the voters whose local support was found to be useful. That there was a line of action on which any Northern statesman could have entered, consistently with all the obligations flowing from the letter and the spirit of the Federal Constitution, is perfectly plain.

While it was impracticable for the people of the North to act directly upon slavery in any State through the Federal Government, it was not impracticable for that Government to follow, with cautious steps, in auxiliary measures to aid what it could not initiate. There were States which were becoming ripe for changes in the condition of their colored population. Of course such changes could be proposed, considered and acted upon only in each of those States, as a measure that concerned its own domestic condition. But there were many ways in which the Federal Government, without transcending its constitutional powers, could incidentally assist any State in what the State had of itself determined to do. The line which separated what the Federal power could legitimately and properly do from what was prohibited to it by every political and moral consideration, was not difficult to be discovered. For example, if the State of Virginia had in 1832-33 adopted any system for colonizing her negroes, what was there to prevent the Federal Government

from granting a portion of the public lands for such a purpose? If the subject of prospective emancipation had been approached in this manner, without the disturbance produced by the anti-slavery societies of the North, who can doubt that experiments of the utmost consequence could have been tried, and tried successfully, in a country possessing an almost boundless public domain? But the sudden irruption of those societies into the field, their disregard of all prudential and all constitutional restraints, their fierce denunciations of the slaveholder, their demand for instant and unqualified manumission, at once converted a question which should have remained a matter for joint and friendly coöperation of the two sections, into a struggle for political supremacy of one section over the other in the councils of the Federal Government. All measures and tendencies in the South, which might have opened the way for subsidiary aid on the part of the Federal power, were at once arrested; and it became a study with Southern statesmen how they were to raise new barriers for the defence of slavery, by increasing the political power of their section within the Union. The old barriers had become, in their eyes, but a feeble defence against those who proclaimed that the Union itself was an accursed thing, and that if immediate emancipation of the slaves was not adopted, the Union ought to be broken up.

While it is true that the doctrines of the abolitionists were at first regarded by the great body of the Northern people as the ravings of fanatics, insomuch that they were sometimes subjected to popular violence, they were nevertheless making progress. Year after year the agitation was carried on in the same spirit, and year after year the excitement on the whole subject of slavery continued to grow until it reached a fresh impulse in the proposed annexation of Texas. It should in justice be remembered that the effort at that period to enlarge the area of slavery was an effort on the part of the South, dictated by a desire to remain in the Union, and not to accept the issue of an inherent incompatibility of a political union between slaveholding and non-slaveholding States. It was not at this period that the Southern States embraced, or were much disposed to embrace, the doctrine of "secession." The views of the nature of the Union, maintained by their most distin-

gnished and powerful statesman, Mr. Calhoun, in 1830-33, led logically to the deduction that every State has, by the terms of the Federal compact, a right to quit the Union when, in its own judgment, it deems that step necessary. But no considerable body of persons in the South, out of his own State, accepted his premises or followed them to their conclusion, until long after he was in his grave; nor did he himself propose secession as a remedy against what he and the whole South regarded as the unwarrantable aggressions of the Northern abolitionists. He aimed to strengthen the political power of his section within the Union, and his whole course in regard to the acquisition of Texas shows his conviction that if that country were not brought under our dominion, there would be an exposed frontier, from which England and the American abolitionists would operate against slavery in the Southern section of the United States. The previous history of the Union shows very plainly that prior to the commencement of the Northern anti-slavery agitation, the political equilibrium between the two sections had not been seriously disturbed.

At the period which I am now considering, the public men of the North who acted an important part in national affairs, and who belonged, as Mr. Buchanan unquestionably did belong, to the higher class of statesmen, had to act with a wise circumspection on this subject of slavery. There was nothing that such a man could do, if he regarded his public duty with an American statesman's sense of public obligation, but to stand aloof from and to discountenance what was wrong in the doings of the anti-slavery agitators. In this course of conduct he had often to discriminate between conflicting claims of constitutional rights that unquestionably belonged to every citizen of the United States, and acts which no citizen had a right to do, or which it was in the highest and plainest sense inexpedient to allow him to do. In these conflicts, right and wrong became at times so mixed and intricate, that it required a resolute and clear intellect to separate them, and a lofty courage in meeting obloquy and misrepresentation. It was an easy matter, in the exciting period of those slavery questions, to impute to a Northern man of either of the great political parties of the time, a base truckling to the South for his own ambitious pur-

poses. After ages must disregard the ephemeral vituperation of politics, and must judge the statesmen of the past by the situation in which they stood, by the soundness of their opinions, by their fidelity to every unquestionable right, by the correctness of their policy, and by the purity of their characters and their aims. There has been a passionate disposition in our day to judge the public men of the North, who had to act in great and peculiar crises of the sectional conflict, and who did not give themselves up to a purely sectional spirit, by a standard that was inapplicable to their situation, because it was unjust, illogical and inconsistent with the highest ideas of public duty in the administration of such a Government as ours.

The anti-slavery agitation, begun in the North at the time and carried on in the mode I have described, is to be deplored, because of the certainty that sudden emancipation, which was alone considered or cared for by the abolitionists, must be fraught with great evils.

In whatever way sudden, universal and unqualified emancipation was to be enforced, if it was to happen the negro could not be prepared for freedom. He must take his freedom without one single aid from the white man to fit him to receive it. Wise and thoughtful statesmen saw this—the abolitionist did not see it. Men who had passed their lives in the business of legislation and government, knew full well, not only that the fundamental political bond of the Union forbade interference by the people of the free States with the domestic institutions of the slave States, but that emancipation without any training for freedom could not be a blessing. Men who had passed their lives in an emotional agitation for instant freedom did not see or did not care for the inevitable fact, that freedom for which no preparation had been made could not be a boon. When the emancipation came, it came as an act of force applied in a civil war and in the settlements which the war was claimed to have entailed as necessities. No preparatory legislation, no helpful training in morality and virtue, no education, no discipline of the human being for his new condition, had prepared the negro to be a freeman. While, therefore, it may be and probably is true, that the whites of our Southern States have reason to rejoice, and do rejoice, in the change which they

deprecatcd and against which they struggled, it is not true that the colored race have the same reason for thankfulness. The Christianity and the philanthropy of this age have before them a task that is far more serious, more weighty and more difficult, than it would have been if the emancipation had been a regulated process, even if its final consummation had been postponed for generations. To this day, after twenty years of freedom, the church, the press, society and benevolence have to encounter such questions as these:—Whether the negro is by nature vicious, intractable, thriftless—the women incurably unchaste, the men incurably dishonest; whether the vices and the failings that are so deplorable, and apparently so remediless, are to be attributed to centuries of slavery, or are taints inherent in the blood. Who can doubt that all such questions could have been satisfactorily answered, if the Christianity of the South had been left to its own time and mode of answering them, and without any external force but the force of kindly respectful coöperation and forbearing Christian fellowship.

It is a cause for exultation that slavery no longer exists in the broad domain of this Republic—that our theory and our practice are now in complete accord. But it is no cause for national pride that we did not accomplish this result without the cost of a million of precious lives and untold millions of money.

The repeal of the Missouri Compromise during the administration of President Pierce (May, 1854), followed, as it was three years afterwards, by a decision of the Supreme Court of the United States, that Congress could not constitutionally prohibit slavery in a Territory of the States, gave a vast impetus to the tendencies which were already bringing about a consolidation of most of the elements of the anti-slavery feeling of the North into a single political party. When Mr. Buchanan became the nominee of the Democratic party for the Presidency, although the repeal of the Missouri Compromise had already taken place, the decision of the Supreme Court in the celebrated case of “Dred Scott” had not occurred,\* and consequently the Republican party, for this and other reasons, had not acquired sufficient force to enable it to elect its candidate, General Fremont.

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\* This case was decided in March, 1857, just after Mr. Buchanan's inauguration.

But during the administration of Mr. Buchanan, the scenes which occurred in Kansas and which were direct consequences of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, with the added excitement which followed the announcement by a majority of the judges of the Supreme Court of doctrines which the people of the North would not accept, there was a field for sectional political action, such as the Union had never before known. So that when the Republican party, in the spring of 1856, assembled its delegates in convention at Chicago, for the nomination of its candidates for the Presidency and the Vice Presidency, adopted a "platform" on which no Southern man of any prominence could place himself, and selected Northern candidates for both offices, it was plain that the time had come when there was to be a trial of political strength between the two sections of the Union.

The "Chicago platform," on which Mr. Lincoln was nominated and elected as the candidate of the Republican party, while repudiating with great precision the idea that Congress could in any way act upon slavery in the States, contained the following resolution on the subject of slavery in the Territories of the United States:

"That the normal condition of all the territory of the United States is that of freedom; that as our republican fathers, when they had abolished slavery in all our national territory, ordained that 'no person should be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law,' it becomes our duty, by legislation, whenever such legislation is necessary, to maintain this provision of the Constitution against all attempts to violate it; and we deny the authority of Congress, of a Territorial legislature, or of any individuals, to give legal existence to slavery in any Territory of the United States."

On the motives that dictated the assertion of this doctrine, I have no speculations to offer, for I am not dealing with motives. That it was a new political doctrine, and that it was a new departure in the legislation of Congress on this subject of slavery in Territories cannot be doubted. It rejected entirely the principle on which Congress had acted for many years, for there had been acts of Congress which had given legal existence to slavery in a Territory, and acts of Congress which had prohibited it. It rejected the principle of the Missouri Compromise, which had

sanctioned an agreed division of the Territories into those where slavery might not and those where it might be allowed. It rejected all claim of right on the part of the Southern slaveholder to take his slave property into a Territory and have it there recognized as property while the Territorial condition remained. It was a reading of the Constitution diametrically opposed to the Southern reading. The political men who framed this "platform" doubtless considered that the time had come for a direct antagonism between the North and the South on this subject, so that it might be decided by the votes of the people in a Presidential election, whether the Southern claim for recognition of slave property in any Territory of the United States, wherever situated, was to prevail or be rejected. That such antagonism was the consequence and the purpose of this declaration of a new principle of action on this subject will be denied by no one.

It is equally certain that a political party could not come into the field in a contest for the Presidency upon such a declaration, without drawing into the discussion the whole subject of slavery as a domestic institution, or a condition of society, both in States and Territories. The intention was to draw a well defined line between the relations of Congress to slavery in the States and the relations of Congress to slavery in the Territories. Yet in the excitements of a Presidential canvass, the Republican party of necessity gathered into its folds those who had been for years regardless of that distinction, and who assailed slavery in the regions which were under the legislative power of Congress for the purpose of assailing it everywhere. The campaign literature, the speeches, the discussions, which dwelt on "the irrepressible conflict" between slavery and freedom, and which proclaimed the issue to be whether the United States would sooner or later become a slaveholding nation or a free-labor nation—whether the Northern States were to remain free or to become slave States—set forth with great distinctness in the writings and the harangues, could have no other effect than to array the two sections of the Union in a bitter hostility, while in the South there were those who believed, or affected to believe, that the people of the North, if successful in electing a President upon this basis, would put forth all their efforts to

destroy slavery everywhere, as an institution incompatible with the continued existence of freedom in the North. All this hazard might, however, have been encountered and parried if the Democratic party had been in a condition to nominate a suitable candidate upon a "platform" fit to be opposed to that of the Republicans, and capable of commending itself alike to Northern and Southern voters. But when this party assembled in convention at Charleston, on the 23d of April, 1860, it was in no condition to do any good to the Union or to itself. If Mr. Buchanan had been a younger man, and had been disposed to be a second time a candidate for the Presidency, he might have united his party upon a basis of action in regard to this dangerous matter of slavery in the Territories, that would have commanded the support of a sufficient number of States, Northern as well as Southern, to have elected him. But he was averse to any longer continuance in public life, and he was well aware how much Mr. Douglas had done which had tended to divide the Northern and the Southern wings of his party. On the 14th of April, 1860, he sent to Charleston the following letter, which put an end to the idea, so far as it may have been entertained, of his being regarded as a candidate for the nomination by the Democratic National Convention.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO HON. ARNOLD PLUMER.]

WASHINGTON CITY, April 14, 1860.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I address you not only as a delegate from Pennsylvania to the Charleston Democratic National Convention, but as an old and valued friend. Whilst trusting that no member of that body will propose my name as a candidate for reelection, yet, lest this might possibly prove to be the case, I require you, then, immediately to inform the Convention, as an act of justice to myself, that in no contingency can I ever again consent to become a candidate for the Presidency. My purpose to this effect was clearly indicated both in accepting the Cincinnati nomination, and afterwards in my inaugural address, and has since been repeated on various occasions, both public and private. In this determination neither my judgment nor my inclination has ever for a moment wavered. Deeply grateful to the great Democratic party of the country, on whose continued ascendancy, as I verily believe, the prosperity and perpetuity of our Confederate Republic depend, and praying Heaven that the Convention



may select as their candidate an able, sound and conservative Democrat, in whose support we can all cordially unite.—I remain, very respectfully, your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

It is not at all difficult to see what Mr. Buchanan would have recommended if he had been asked to shape the action of his party. It is well known that he held it to be both right and expedient to recognize the claim of Southern emigrants into the Territories to an equal participation in the common domain of the Union, so far as to have their property in slaves admitted during the continuance of the Territorial condition. But he would have qualified this claim of right by the application of the principle of the Missouri Compromise; that is, by admitting it in Territories south of the line of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ , and by excluding it in Territories north of that line. This had been the former practice of Congress, and there could be no good reason now for not expecting the people of the North to make this concession to the South, excepting that Mr. Douglas had indoctrinated a portion of the Northern Democrats with his panacea of "popular sovereignty," which was just as unacceptable to the South as the principles of the "Chicago platform."

Accordingly, when the Democratic Convention assembled at Charleston, it soon found itself in an extricable confusion of opinions as to the nature and extent of the powers of a Territorial legislature, and as to the authority and duties of Congress, under the Constitution of the United States, over slavery in the Territories. While it was in the power of this Democratic Convention to antagonize the Republican party with a platform, simple, reasonable and just to all sections, on which the votes of all sections could be asked, it became divided into a Northern and a Southern faction, and wholly lost the opportunity of appealing to a national spirit of harmony and good-will. The Northern faction, inspired by Mr. Douglas, insisted on the adoption of his principle of "popular sovereignty," which ignored the Southern claim of a property right protected by the Constitution. The Southern faction insisted on the recognition of that right, in a way that ignored the governing authority of both Congress and Territorial legislature.

Without some compromise, there could be no common plat-

form and no common candidate. After many ineffectual attempts to agree upon a platform, and after some secessions of Southern delegates, fifty ballotings for a candidate were carried on until the 3d of May. The highest number of votes received at any time by Mr. Douglas was 152½, 202 being necessary to a nomination. The other votes were scattered among different Northern and Southern men. The convention then adjourned, to meet at Baltimore on the 18th of June, with a recommendation that the party in the several States fill up all vacancies in their respective delegations.\* The result was that when assembled at Baltimore, a dispute about the delegations entitled to seats ended in a disruption of the convention into two bodies, the one distinctly Northern, the other distinctly Southern. The Northern Democratic Convention nominated Mr. Douglas as its candidate, of course upon his platform of "popular sovereignty." The Southern Democratic Convention nominated Mr. Breckinridge as its candidate, upon a platform of coequal rights of all the States in all the Territories. Thus perished every hope of uniting the Democratic party upon a political basis that would antagonize the Republican platform in a sensible manner, and afford a reasonable chance of preventing a sectional political triumph of the North over the South, or of the free over the slave States.†

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\* It appears from the following letter, written by General Dix to Mr. Buchanan, after the Charleston Convention had adjourned, that the course of the New York delegation in that body was not acceptable to their constituents :

NEW YORK, May 9, 1860.

MY DEAR SIR :—

The course of the New York delegation at Charleston has caused great dissatisfaction here, and earnest efforts will be made before the meeting at Baltimore to induce a change of action on the part of the majority. Mr. Douglas is not the choice of the Democracy of this State ; and if he were, we think it most unreasonable to attempt to force on the States which must elect the Democratic candidate (if he can be elected), a man they do not want. We hope for the best, but not without the deepest concern.

I took the liberty to address to you the address of the Democratic General Committee of this city, published about three weeks ago. It takes substantially the ground of the majority report from the Committee on Resolutions at Charleston, and we think the New York delegation should have supported them. I believe this is the general feeling in this State. It certainly is in this city and the southern counties. I have thought it right to say this to you, and to express the hope that the New York delegation will go to Baltimore prepared to sustain a candidate who will be acceptable to our Southern friends. At all events, no effort will be spared to bring about such a result.

I am, dear sir, sincerely yours,

JOHN A. DIX.

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† It should be said that the convention, when assembled at Baltimore, became divided into two conventions, in consequence of the withdrawal of the delegations of some of the

Mr. Buchanan, after the two factions of the Democratic party had made their nominations, pursued the course which became him as an outgoing President. As a citizen, he had to choose between Mr. Breckinridge and Mr. Douglas. The former represented more nearly the political principles of Mr. Buchanan than any other candidate whom he could support, and it was to Mr. Breckinridge that he gave all the support which it was proper for him to give to any one. But his views of the whole situation are apparent in the following letter, written in July, 1860 :—

[MR. BUCHANAN TO C. COMSTOCK.]

WASHINGTON, July 5, 1860.

DEAR SIR :—

I have received yours of the 3d inst., and although I do not write letters on the subject to which it refers, I have determined to address you a few lines.

The equality of the States in the Territories is a truly Democratic doctrine which must eventually prevail. This is all for which I have ever contended. The Supreme Court of the United States,—a coördinate branch of the Government, to which the decision of this question constitutionally belongs, have affirmed this equality, and have placed property in slaves upon the same footing with all other property. Without self-degradation, the Southern States cannot abandon this equality, and hence they are now all in a flame. Non-intervention on the part of Congress with slavery in the Territories, unless accompanied by non-intervention on the part of the Territorial legislatures, amounts to nothing more in effect than to transfer the Wilmot Proviso from Congress to these legislatures. Whilst the South cannot surrender their rights as coequal States in the confederacy, what injury can it possibly do to the Northern States to yield this great Democratic principle? If they should not do this, then we will have the Democratic party divided, South and North, just as the Methodist Church has been divided, and another link binding the Union together will be broken. No person can fairly contend that either

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most southern of the Southern States, after they found that the friends of Mr. Douglas were determined to thrust him upon them as the candidate. It has been said that this was done to prevent any nomination, and thereby to prepare the way for a dissolution of the Union. It is more reasonable to believe that it was done to prevent the nomination of a particular candidate. But if these delegates had remained, Mr. Douglas could not have been nominated, and a compromise candidate might have been selected, so as to preserve the unity and strength of the party. For this reason, the withdrawal was rash and unwise, for it brought into the field a distinctly Southern Democratic candidate, with a distinctly Southern platform. Mr. Douglas obtained the electoral vote of no Southern, and Mr. Breckinridge obtained the electoral vote of no Northern State.

assemblage at Baltimore, at the time the nominations were made, was a Democratic National Convention; hence every Democrat is free to choose between the two candidates. These are, in brief, my sentiments. I regret that they so widely differ from your own. You have taken your own course, which you had a perfect right to do, and you will, I know, extend a similar privilege to myself.

Yours very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

The sole part that was taken by President Buchanan, in any public manner, in the election of 1860, was in a speech which he made from the portico of the White House, on the evening of July 9th, when a great crowd assembled in front of the mansion and called him out. In the course of his remarks, he said :

I have ever been the friend of regular nominations. I have never struck a political ticket in my life. Now, was there anything done at Baltimore to bind the political conscience of any sound Democrat, or to prevent him from supporting Breckinridge or Lane? ["No! no!"] I was contemporary with the abandonment of the old Congressional convention or caucus. This occurred a long time ago; very few, if any, of you remember it. Under the old Congressional convention system, no person was admitted to a seat except the Democratic members of the Senate and House of Representatives. This rule rendered it absolutely certain that the nominee, whoever he might be, would be sustained at the election by the Democratic States of the Union. By this means it was rendered impossible that those States which could not give an electoral vote for the candidate when nominated, should control the nomination and dictate to the Democratic States who should be their nominee.

This system was abandoned—whether wisely or not, I shall express no opinion. The National Convention was substituted in its stead. All the States, whether Democratic or not, were equally to send delegates to this convention according to the number of their Senators and Representatives in Congress.

A difficulty at once arose which never could have arisen under the Congressional convention system. If a bare majority of the National Convention thus composed could nominate a candidate, he might be nominated mainly by the anti-Democratic States against the will of a large majority of the Democratic States. Thus the nominating power would be separated from the electing power, which could not fail to be destructive to the strength and harmony of the Democratic party.

To obviate this serious difficulty in the organization of a National Convention, and at the same time to leave all the States their full vote, the two-thirds rule was adopted. It was believed that under this rule no candidate could

ever be nominated without embracing within the two-thirds the votes of a decided majority of the Democratic States. This was the substitute adopted to retain, at least in a great degree, the power to the Democratic States which they would have lost by abandoning the Congressional convention system. This rule was a main pillar in the edifice of national conventions. Remove it and the whole must become a ruin. This sustaining pillar was broken to pieces at Baltimore by the convention which nominated Mr. Douglas. After this the body was no longer a national convention; and no Democrat, however devoted to regular nominations, was bound to give the nominee his support; he was left free to act according to the dictates of his own judgment and conscience. And here, in passing, I may observe that the wisdom of the two-thirds rule is justified by the events passing around us. Had it been faithfully observed, no candidate could have been nominated against the will and wishes of almost every certain Democratic State in the Union, against nearly all the Democratic Senators, and more than three-fourths of the Democratic Representatives in Congress. [Cheers.]

I purposely avoid entering upon any discussion respecting the exclusion from the convention of regularly elected delegates from different Democratic States. If the convention which nominated Mr. Douglas was not a regular Democratic convention, it must be confessed that Breckinridge is in the same condition in that respect. The convention that nominated him, although it was composed of nearly all the certain Democratic States, did not contain the two-thirds; and therefore every Democrat is at perfect liberty to vote as he thinks proper, without running counter to any regular nomination of the party. [Applause and cries of "three cheers for Breckinridge and Lane."] Holding this position, I shall present some of the reasons why I prefer Mr. Breckinridge to Mr. Douglas. This I shall do without attempting to interfere with any individual Democrat or any State Democratic organization holding different opinions from myself. The main object of all good Democrats, whether belonging to the one or the other wing of our unfortunate division, is to defeat the election of the Republican candidates; and I shall never oppose any honest and honorable course calculated to accomplish this object.

To return to the point from which I have digressed, I am in favor of Mr. Breckinridge, because he sanctions and sustains the perfect equality of all the States within their common Territories, and the opinion of the Supreme Court of the United States, establishing this equality. The sovereign States of this Union are one vast partnership. The Territories were acquired by the common blood and common treasure of them all. Each State, and each citizen of each State, has the same right in the Territories as any other State and the citizens of any other State possess. Now what is sought for at present is, that a portion of these States should turn around to their sister States and say, "We are holier than you are, and while we will take our property to the Territories and have it protected there, you shall not place your property in the same position." That is precisely what is contended for. What the Democratic party maintain, and what is the true principle of Democracy is, that

all shall enjoy the same rights, and that all shall be subject to the same duties. Property—this Government was framed for the protection of life, liberty, and property. They are the objects for the protection of which all enlightened governments were established. But it is sought now to place the property of the citizen, under what is called the principle of squatter sovereignty, in the power of the Territorial legislature to confiscate it at their will and pleasure. That is the principle sought to be established at present; and there seems to be an entire mistake and misunderstanding among a portion of the public upon this subject. When was property ever submitted to the will of the majority? [“Never.”] If you hold property as an individual, you hold it independent of Congress or of the State legislature, or of the Territorial legislature—it is yours, and your Constitution was made to protect your private property against the assaults of legislative power. [Cheers.] Well, now, any set of principles which will deprive you of your property, is against the very essence of republican government, and to that extent makes you a slave; for the man who has power over your property to confiscate it, has power over your means of subsistence; and yet it is contended, that although the Constitution of the United States confers no such power—although no State legislature has any such power, yet a Territorial legislature, in the remote extremities of the country, can confiscate your property!

[A VOICE. “They can’t do it; they ain’t going to do it.”]

There is but one mode, and one alone, to abolish slavery in the Territories. That mode is pointed out in the Cincinnati platform, which has been as much misrepresented as anything I have ever known. That platform declares that a majority of the actual residents in a Territory, whenever their number is sufficient to entitle them to admission as a State, possess the power to “form a constitution with or without domestic slavery, to be admitted into the Union upon terms of perfect equality with the other States.” If there be squatter sovereignty in this resolution, I have never been able to perceive it. If there be any reference in it to a Territorial legislature, it has entirely escaped my notice. It presents the clear principle that, at the time the people form their constitution, they shall then decide whether they will have slavery or not. And yet it has been stated over and over again that, in accepting the nomination under that platform, I endorsed the doctrine of squatter sovereignty. I suppose you have all heard this repeated a thousand times.

[A VOICE. “We all knew it was a lie!”]

Well, I am glad you did.

How beautifully this plain principle of constitutional law corresponds with the best interests of the people! Under it, emigrants from the North and the South, from the East and the West proceed to the Territories. They carry with them that property which they suppose will best promote their material interests; they live together in peace and harmony. The question of slavery will become a foregone conclusion before they have inhabitants enough to enter the Union as a State. There will then be no “bleeding Kansas” in the Territories; they will all live together in peace and harmony, promoting the

prosperity of the Territory and their own prosperity, until the time shall arrive when it becomes necessary to frame a constitution. Then the whole question will be decided to the general satisfaction. But, upon the opposite principle, what will you find in the Territories? Why, there will be strife and contention all the time. One Territorial legislature may establish slavery and another Territorial legislature may abolish it, and so the struggle will be continued throughout the Territorial existence. The people, instead of devoting their energies and industry to promote their own prosperity, will be in a state of constant strife and turmoil, just as we have witnessed in Kansas. Therefore, there is no possible principle that can be so injurious to the best interests of a Territory as what has been called squatter sovereignty.

Now, let me place the subject before you in another point of view. The people of the Southern States can never abandon this great principle of State equality in the Union without self-degradation. ["Never!"] Never without an acknowledgment that they are inferior in this respect to their sister States. Whilst it is vital to them to preserve their equality, the Northern States surrender nothing by admitting this principle. In doing this they only yield obedience to the Constitution of their country as expounded by the Supreme Court of the United States. While for the North it is comparatively a mere abstraction, with the South it is a question of co-equal State sovereignty in the Union.

If the decrees of the high tribunal established by the Constitution for the very purposes are to be set at naught and disregarded, it will tend to render all property of every description insecure. What, then, have the North to do? Merely to say that, as good citizens, they will yield obedience to the decision of the Supreme Court, and admit the right of a Southern man to take his property into the Territories, and hold it there just as a Northern man may do; and it is to me the most extraordinary thing in the world that this country should now be distracted and divided because certain persons at the North will not agree that their brethren at the South shall have the same rights in the Territories which they enjoy. What would I, as a Pennsylvanian, say or do, supposing anybody was to contend that the legislature of any Territory could outlaw iron or coal within the Territory? [Laughter and cheers.] The principle is precisely the same. The Supreme Court of the United States have decided,—what was known to us all to have been the existing state of affairs for fifty years,—that slaves are property. Admit that fact, and you admit everything. Then that property in the Territories must be protected precisely in the same manner with any other property. If it be not so protected in the Territories, the holders of it are degraded before the world.

We have been told that non-intervention on the part of Congress with slavery in the Territories is the true policy. Very well. I most cheerfully admit that Congress has no right to pass any law to establish, impair or abolish slavery in the Territories. Let this principle of non-intervention be extended to the Territorial legislatures, and let it be declared that they in like manner have no power to establish, impair or destroy slavery, and then the contro-

versy is in effect ended. This is all that is required at present, and I verily believe all that will ever be required. Hands off by Congress and hands off by the Territorial legislature. [Loud applause.] With the Supreme Court of the United States I hold that neither Congress nor the Territorial legislature has any power to establish, impair or abolish slavery in the Territories. But if, in the face of this positive prohibition, the Territorial legislature should exercise the power of intervening, then this would be a mere transfer of the Wilmot proviso and the Buffalo platform from Congress, to be carried into execution in the Territories to the destruction of all property in slaves. [Renewed applause.]

An attempt of this kind, if made in Congress, would be resisted by able men on the floor of both houses, and probably defeated. Not so in a remote Territory. To every new Territory there will be a rush of free-soilers from the Northern States. They would elect the first Territorial legislature before the people of the South could arrive with their property, and this legislature would probably settle forever the question of slavery according to their own will.

And shall we for the sake of squatter sovereignty, which, from its nature, can only continue during the brief period of Territorial existence, incur the risk of dividing the great Democratic party of the country into two sectional parties, the one North and the other South? Shall this great party which has governed the country in peace and war, which has raised it from humble beginnings to be one of the most prosperous and powerful nations in the world—shall this party be broken up for such a cause? That is the question. The numerous, powerful, pious and respectable Methodist Church has been thus divided. The division was a severe shock to the Union. A similar division of the great Democratic party, should it continue, would rend asunder one of the most powerful links which binds the Union together.

I entertain no such fearful apprehensions. The present issue is transitory, and will speedily pass away. In the nature of things it cannot continue. There is but one possible contingency which can endanger the Union, and against this all Democrats, whether squatter sovereigns or popular sovereigns, will present a united resistance. Should the time ever arrive when Northern agitation and fanaticism shall proceed so far as to render the domestic firesides of the South insecure, then, and not till then, will the Union be in danger. A united Northern Democracy will present a wall of fire against such a catastrophe!

There are in our midst numerous persons who predict the dissolution of the great Democratic party, and others who contend that it has already been dissolved. The wish is father to the thought. It has been heretofore in great peril; but when divided for the moment, it has always closed up its ranks and become more powerful, even from defeat. It will never die whilst the Constitution and the Union survive. It will live to protect and defend both. It has its roots in the very vitals of the Constitution, and, like one of the ancient cedars of Lebanon, it will flourish to afford shelter and protection to that



sacred instrument, and to shield it against every storm of faction. [Renewed applause.]

Now, friends and fellow-citizens, it is probable that this is the last political speech that I shall ever make. [A VOICE. "We hope not!"] It is now nearly forty years since I first came to Washington as a member of Congress, and I wish to say this night, that during that whole period I have received nothing but kindness and attention from your fathers and from yourselves. Washington was then comparatively a small town; now it has grown to be a great and beautiful city; and the first wish of my heart is that its citizens may enjoy uninterrupted health and prosperity. I thank you for the kind attention you have paid to me, and now bid you all a good-night. [Prolonged cheering.]

The observations contained in this chapter on the anti-slavery agitation have been made because that agitation and its consequences are great historical facts, necessary to be considered in a just appreciation of the conduct of any American statesman who acted an important part in national affairs during the quarter of a century that preceded the civil war. The detail of Mr. Buchanan's course on this subject, down to the time when he became President, has been given, and need not be repeated.

He was one of the earliest of the public men of the North to discover and to point out the tendency of this agitation. That he denounced it boldly and sincerely cannot be denied, even by those who may not have held, or who do not now hold, the same opinions concerning the "abolitionists" and their measures. He endeavored, at an early period, to keep his own State of Pennsylvania free from the adoption of such dogmas as the "higher law," and to have its people appreciate the mischiefs which the anti-slavery societies were producing in the South. It is easy to impute this course to his political relations to the Democratic party and to the dictates of his own ambition as one of its principal Northern leaders, who, in any future prospect of political honors beyond those which his own State could bestow, might have to look to Southern support. But is there no sensible, patriotic, sound and unselfish motive, no honest and well grounded conviction, discoverable in what he did and said? If his opinions about this agitation were substantially in accordance with those of wise and judicious men, who could not have been influenced by party spirit or personal objects, they may claim to have been sincere and just, as certainly as they may claim to have been courageously uttered.

It will not be doubted that when the abolition agitation began, there was at least one man in the North, who, from his deep and fervid interest in whatever concerned the rights of human nature and the welfare of the human race, from his generous love of liberty and his philanthropic tendencies, might be expected to welcome any rational mode of removing the reproach and the evil of slavery from the American name and the condition of American society. Such a man was that celebrated New England divine, William Ellery Channing. What his feelings were about the slavery that existed in our Southern States, all who know anything of his character and his writings know full well. His position as a clergyman and his relations to the moral and spiritual condition of the age, put out of the question the possibility of any political motive, other than that broad, high and comprehensive view of public policy which was above all the interests of party, and beyond all personal considerations. If such a man foresaw the dangerous tendencies of the abolition agitation, conducted in and from the North, and at the same time discovered that the evil of slavery ought to be and might be dealt with in a very different spirit and by far other means, it is rational to conclude that men in public life and in political positions might well place themselves in opposition to the spread of such principles and the adoption of such methods as those of the anti-slavery societies of the North. It was, in truth, the one thing which it was their duty, as statesmen, to do.\*

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\* Dr. Channing's attention was first drawn to the Northern anti-slavery agitation in the year 183-, and there is nowhere on record a more remarkable prophecy than that which he then made of the effect of this agitation upon the people of the South. It is contained in a letter which he then wrote to Mr. Webster, and which has been public ever since the publication of Mr. Webster's collected works.

## CHAPTER XIV.

1860—October.

### GENERAL SCOTT'S "VIEWS."

WHILE during the month of October (1860) President Buchanan was anxiously watching the course of public events, he was surprised by receiving from General Scott, the General-in-chief of the Army, a very extraordinary paper. It was written on the 29th of October, from New York, where the General had his headquarters, and was mailed to the President on the same day. On the 30th the General sent a corrected copy to the Secretary of War, with a supplement. These papers became known as General Scott's "views." He lent copies of them to some of his friends, to be read; and although they did not immediately reach the public press, their contents became pretty well known in the South through private channels. From them the following facts were apparent:

FIRST.—That before the Presidential election, General Scott anticipated that there would be a secession of one or more of the Southern States, in the event of Mr. Lincoln's election; and that from the general rashness of the Southern character, there was danger of a "preliminary" seizure of certain Southern forts, which he named.

SECOND.—That the secession which General Scott deprecated was one that would produce what he called a "gap in the Union;" that he contemplated, as a choice of evils to be embraced instead of a civil war, the allowance of a division of the Union into four separate confederacies, having contiguous territory; and that he confined the use of force, or a resort to force, on the part of the Federal Government, to the possible case of the secession of some "interior" States, to reestablish the continuity of the Federal territory. This he considered might be regarded as a "correlative right," balancing the right of secession, which he said might be conceded "in order to save time."

THIRD.—That his provisional remedy, or preliminary caution, viz: The immediate garrisoning of the Southern forts sufficiently to prevent a surprise or *coup de main*, was confined to the possible or probable case of a secession

that would make a "gap" in the Union, or break the continuity of the Federal territory. He excluded from the scope of his "provisional remedies" the secession of Texas, or of all the Atlantic States south of the Potomac, as neither would produce a "gap" in the Union.

FOURTH.—That for the application of his "provisional remedies," he had at his command but five companies of regular troops, to prevent surprises of the nine Southern forts which he named; and that as to "regular approaches," nothing could be said or done without calling for volunteers.

FIFTH.—That in the meantime the Federal Government should collect its revenue outside of the Southern cities, in forts or on board ships of war; and that after any State had seceded, there should be no invasion of it, unless it should happen to be an "interior" State.

SIXTH.—That the aim of his plan was to gain eight or ten months to await measures of conciliation on the part of the North, and the subsidence of angry feelings in the South.

If these "views," palpably impracticable and dangerous, had remained unknown in the hands of the President, there would have been no necessity for commenting on them in this work, especially as subsequent events rendered them of no importance. But they did not remain unknown. They became the foundation, at a later period, of a charge that President Buchanan had been warned by General Scott, before the election of Mr. Lincoln, of the danger of leaving the Southern forts without sufficient garrisons to prevent surprises, and that he had neglected this warning. Moreover, in these "views," the General-in-chief of the Army, addressing the President, had mingled the strangest political suggestions with military movements, on the eve of a Presidential election which was about to result in a sectional political division. It is therefore necessary for me to bestow upon these "views" a degree of attention which would otherwise be unnecessary.

These papers were addressed by the General-in-chief of the Army of the United States to a President who utterly repudiated the alleged right of secession, by any State whatever, whether lying between other States remaining loyal, or on the extreme boundary of the Union. Becoming known to the Southern leaders who might be disposed to carry their States out of the Union in the event of Mr. Lincoln's election, they would justify the inference that in one case at least, that of a secession which did not make a "gap" in the Union, the General-in-chief of the

Federal Army would not draw his sword to compel the inhabitants of the seceded region to submit to the laws of the United States. In regard to the "provisional remedies" which the general advised, let it be observed that if the President had had at his disposal the whole army of the United States, the introduction into the Southern forts of a larger or a smaller force, at such a moment, however officially explained, could have been regarded in the South only as a proof that President Buchanan expected secession to be attempted, and that he was preparing for a civil war, to be waged by him or his successor. The right of the Federal Government to place its own troops in its own forts, without giving offence to any one, was perfectly apparent; but it was equally apparent that on the eve of this election, or during the election, or at any time before any State had adopted an ordinance of secession, such a step could not have been taken as anything but an indication that the Federal Government was preparing to prevent by force the people of any State from assembling to consider and act upon their relations to the Government of the United States. Now a very great part of the popular misapprehension of President Buchanan's policy, purposes and acts, which has prevailed to the present day, has arisen from the total want of discrimination between what the Federal Government could and what it could not rightfully do, in anticipation of the secession of a State or States. It has been a thousand times inconsiderately asked, why Mr. Buchanan did not nip secession in the bud.

In the first place, the Federal Government, however great might be the physical force at its command, could at no time have done anything more than enforce the execution of its own laws and maintain the possession of its own property. To prevent the people of a State, by any menace of arms, from assembling in convention to consider anything whatever, would have been to act on the assumption that she was about to adopt an ordinance of secession, and on the farther assumption that such an act must be forestalled, lest it might have some kind of validity. The Executive of the United States was not bound, and was not at liberty, to act upon such assumptions. There were many ways in which a State convention could peacefully take into consideration the relations of its people to the Federal

Union. They might lawfully appeal to the sobriety and good feeling of their sister States to redress any grievances of which they complained. There might be, we know that in point of fact there was, a strong Union party in most of the Southern States, and the President of the United States, in the month of October, 1860, would have been utterly inexcusable, if he had proclaimed to the country that he expected this party to be overborne, and had helped to diminish its members and weaken its power, by extraordinary garrisons placed in the Southern forts, in anticipation of their seizure by lawless individuals, when such an exhibition must inevitably lead the whole people of the South to believe that there was to be no solution of the sectional differences but by a trial of strength in a sectional civil war. Mr. Buchanan was far too wise and circumspect a statesman to put into the hands of the secessionists such a means of "firing the Southern heart," before it was known what the result of the Presidential election would be. It was his plain and imperative duty not to assume, by any official act, at such a time, that there was to be a secession of any State or States.

But, in the second place, even if other good reasons did not exist, there were but five companies of regular troops, or four hundred men, available for the garrisoning of nine fortifications in six highly excited Southern States. How were they to be distributed? Distributed equally, they would have amounted to a reinforcement of forty-four men and a fraction in each fort. In whatsoever proportions they might be distributed, according to the conjectured degree of exposure of the various posts, the movement could have been nothing but an invitation of attack, which the force would have been entirely inadequate to repel. The whole army of the United States then consisted of only eighteen thousand men. They were, with the exception of the five companies named by General Scott, scattered on the remote frontiers and over the great Western plains, engaged in the protection of the settlers and the emigrant trains; and for this duty their numbers were, and had long been, and have ever since been, notoriously inadequate. At a later period, after President Buchanan had retired from office, General Scott, in a controversy in the public prints which he thought

proper to provoke with the ex-President, referred to six hundred recruits in the harbor of New York and at Carlisle barracks in Pennsylvania, which, added to the five companies mentioned in his "views," would have made a force of one thousand men ; and while he admitted that this force would not have been sufficient to furnish "war garrisons" for the nine Southern forts, he maintained that they would have been quite enough to guard against surprises. But it is to be noted that in his "views" of October, 1860, he made known to the President that there were *only* the five companies, which he named, "within reach, to garrison the forts mentioned in the views ;" and, moreover, he was mistaken, in November, 1862, in supposing that he had obtained these recruits when he wrote his "views," nor did he, in October or November, 1860, in any manner suggest to the President that there were any more than the five companies available. Had he made any military representations to the President before the election, other than those contained in his "views," it cannot be doubted that they would have received all the consideration due to his official position and his great military reputation.\*

But General Scott's "views" produced, and ought to have produced, no impression upon the mind of the President. That part of them which suggested a military movement was entirely impracticable. The political part, which related to the aspects of secession, its possible admission in one case and its denial in another, was of no value whatever to anybody but those who believed in the doctrine. With the exception of such circulation of these "views" as General Scott permitted by giving copies of them to his friends, they remained unpublished until the 18th of January, 1861. On that day they were pub-

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\* It is a remarkable fact that when President Lincoln was inaugurated, five months after General Scott sent his "views" to President Buchanan, and it was feared that the inauguration might be interrupted by violence of some kind, he was able to assemble at Washington but six hundred and fifty-three men, of the rank and file of the army. This number was made up by bringing the sappers and miners from West Point. Yet, down to that period, no part of the army, excepting the five companies referred to by General Scott in his "views," had been disposed of anywhere but where the presence of a military force was essential to the protection of the settlers on the frontiers and the emigrants on the plains. No one could have known this better than General Scott, for it was his official duty to know it, and it is plain that his "views" were written with a full knowledge of the situation of the whole army.

lished, by General Scott's permission, in the *National Intelligencer* at Washington, the editors saying that they had obtained a copy of them for publication because allusion had been made to them both in the public prints and in public speeches. This document, therefore, in an authentic shape, was made public in the midst of the secession movement, after the States of South Carolina, Florida, Mississippi and Alabama had adopted their ordinances of secession, and while the people of Georgia, Louisiana, Texas and Arkansas were deliberating upon their course.\* The President at that time passed over this publication in silence, for reasons which he afterwards assigned in the public controversy between General Scott and himself in October and November, 1862.

And here it may be appropriate, before proceeding farther with the narrative, to advert to a suggestion which has been again and again repeated in a great variety of forms, by those who have criticised Mr. Buchanan's course in regard to the reinforcement of the Southern forts. General Scott himself, after the election of Mr. Lincoln, in the middle of December, 1860, in a note which he addressed to the President, referred to the course pursued by President Jackson in regard to nullification, in 1832-33; and it has long been one of the current questions, asked as if it were unanswerable,—why did not Mr. Buchanan imitate the firmness, boldness and decision with which General Jackson dealt with the "Nullifiers," and proceed to garrison the Southern forts before the election of Mr. Lincoln? Having already shown the impracticability of such a step, from the want of the necessary forces, and its great political inexpediency even if the necessary force had been within his reach, it only remains for me to point out that there was no parallel between the situation of things under General Jackson in 1832-33, and the state of the country under President Buchanan in 1860-61. South Carolina stood alone in her resistance to the collection of the revenue of the United States, in 1832-33; nor, whatever might be the steps which she would

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\* At the time of this publication of General Scott's "views," of the States which seceded before the attack on Fort Sumter, four had adopted ordinances of secession, and three had not acted. The eighth State, Arkansas, did not act until after Sumter.



have the rashness to take in preventing the execution of a single law of the United States within her borders, there was no danger that any other State would become infected with her political heresies, or imitate her example. What General Jackson had to do was to collect the revenue of the United States in the port of Charleston. For this purpose, prior to the issue of his proclamation, and while the so-called ordinance of nullification was pending in the convention of South Carolina, he took preliminary steps, by placing in the harbor a sufficient military and naval force to insure the execution of a single Federal statute, commonly called the "tariff." For this purpose he had ample authority of law, under the Act of March 3, 1807, which authorized the employment of the land and naval forces, when necessary, to execute the laws of the United States through the process of the Federal tribunals. He had, moreover, the necessary forces practically at his disposal. So far as these forces would consist of troops, their proper destination was Fort Moultrie in Charleston harbor; but their presence in that fort was deemed necessary, not to prevent an anticipated seizure of it by the State authorities, but to aid in the execution of the revenue law in case it should be resisted. For this purpose, in March, 1833, he sent a small military force to Fort Moultrie, and a sloop of war, with two revenue cutters, to Charleston harbor. General Scott was sent to Charleston to take the command of these forces, if it should become necessary for them to act. He arrived there on the day after the passage of the Nullification ordinance. The proclamation of General Jackson, the passage of Mr. Clay's Compromise Tariff Bill, and the passage of the Force Bill, put an end to any actual collision between the State and the Federal authorities.

How different was the state of the country in 1860, before the election of Mr. Lincoln! A generation of men had grown up in the South, many of whom held the supposed right of State secession from the Union as a cardinal feature of their political and constitutional creed. The sole ground for any apprehension of a practical assertion of this doctrine was the contingent election of a President nominated upon a "platform" obnoxious to the people of the slaveholding States. In such a state of affairs, was it for a President, whose administra-

tion was to expire in five months, to adopt the foregone conclusion that the Republican candidate would be elected, and to add to this the further conclusion that his election would be followed by a secession of States, which the people of the North would take no conciliatory steps to prevent after the Republican candidate had been elected? Was President Buchanan to throw a military force into the Southern forts, even if he had had a sufficient force within his reach, and thus to proclaim to the whole people of the South, the loyal and the disloyal, that in his judgment there would be but one issue out of the election of Mr. Lincoln—an issue of physical force between the two sections of the country? In what condition would this have placed his successor, and the great political party which was aiming to obtain for that successor the control of the Government? Surely Mr. Lincoln and his political supporters would have had the gravest reason to complain, if Mr. Buchanan, before the election, had, by any act of his own not palpably and imperatively necessary, caused it to be believed by the whole Southern people that there was and could be no alternative but to put their anticipated dangers, their alleged grievances, and the doctrine of secession along with them, at once to the arbitrament of the sword. We have it on Mr. Buchanan's own solemn assertion, the sincerity of which there can be no reason to doubt, that he considered it his highest duty so to shape his official course during the remainder of his term, as to afford to the secessionists of the South no excuse for renouncing their allegiance to the Federal Union, and to hand the government over to his successor, whoever he might be, without doing a single act that would tend to close the door of reconciliation between the two sections of the country, then unfortunately divided by the political circumstances of the pending election. This was the keynote of his policy, formed before the election of Mr. Lincoln, and steadily followed through every vicissitude and every changing aspect of the great drama enacting before his eyes. It is easy to reason backward from what occurred, and to say that he should have garrisoned the Southern forts, in anticipation of their seizure. History does not, or should not, pass upon the conduct of statesmen in highly responsible positions, by pronouncing in this *ex post facto*

manner on what they ought to have anticipated, when men of equally good opportunities for looking forward did not anticipate what subsequently occurred. It was not the belief of the leading public men in the Republican party, before the election of Mr. Lincoln, the men who were likely to be associated with him in the Government, that there would be any secession. If they had believed it, they would certainly have been guilty of great recklessness if they had not acted upon that belief, at least so far as to warn the country, in their respective spheres, to be prepared for such an event. It is one of the most notorious truths in the whole history of that election, that the political supporters of Mr. Lincoln scouted the idea that there was any danger of secession to be apprehended.

General Scott's suggestion of such danger to Mr. Buchanan, in the month of October, 1860, and the impracticable advice which he then gave, if it had been published before the election, would have been laughed at by every Republican statesman in the country, or would have been indignantly treated as a work of supererogation, unnecessarily suggesting that the election of the Republican candidate was to be followed by an attempted disruption of the Union. Undoubtedly, as the event proved, the political friends of Mr. Lincoln were too confident that no secession would be attempted; and into that extreme confidence they were led by their political policy, which did not admit of their allowing the people of the North to believe that there could be any serious danger to the country in their political triumph. If the people of the North had believed in that danger, the Republican candidate would not have been elected. It did not become the Republican leaders, therefore, after the election, and it never can become any one who has inherited their political connection, to blame Mr. Buchanan for not taking extraordinary precautions against an event which the responsible leaders of the party, prior to the election, treated as if it were out of all the bounds of probability.\*

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\* It will be seen that I do not regard the election of Mr. Lincoln as a defiance of the South, nor do I consider that the threats of secession, so far as such threats were uttered in the South, had much to do with the success of the Republican candidate. Multitudes of men voted for that candidate in no spirit of defiance towards the South, and his popular vote would have been much smaller than it was, if it had been believed at the North that his election would be followed by an attempted disruption of the Union.

And here, too, it is well to advert to a charge which relates to Mr. Buchanan's administration of the Government prior to the election of his successor. This charge, to which a large measure of popular credence has long been accorded, is, that the Secretary of War, Mr. Floyd, had for a long time pursued a plan of his own for distributing the troops and arms of the United States in anticipation of a disruption of the Union at no distant day. But such a charge is of course to be tried by a careful examination of facts, and by a scrupulous attention to dates. One of the most important facts to be considered is, that Secretary Floyd, who came in 1857 into Mr. Buchanan's cabinet from Virginia—a State that never had, down to that time and for a long period thereafter, many secessionists among her public men—was not of that political school until after he left the office of Secretary of War. He was a Unionist, and a pronounced one, until he chose, as a mere pretext, to say that he differed with the President in regard to the policy which the President thought proper to pursue.\* But from the fact that he became a secessionist and denounced the President, after he left the cabinet, and the foolish boast which he made that he had, while Secretary of War, defeated General Scott's plans and solicitations respecting the forts, the inference has been drawn that he had good reason for advancing that claim upon the consideration of his new political allies in the Southern section of the country. Mr. Floyd by no means appears to me to have been a man of scrupulous honor. The fact that he had been compelled to resign his place on account of a transaction in no way connected with the secession of any State, led him, in a spirit of sheer self-glorification, to give countenance to a charge which, if it had been true, would not only have reflected great discredit on the President, but which would have involved the Secretary himself in the heinous offence of treachery to the Government whose public servant he was. No man could have thus overshot his own mark, who had a careful regard for facts which he must have known: for no one could have known better than Mr. Floyd that he had no influence whatever in defeating any plans which General Scott proposed to the Presi-

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\* See *post*, for the history of Secretary Floyd's resignation.

dent in his "views" of October, 1860, and no one could have known better than he that the troops and arms of the United States had not been distributed with any sinister design. But Mr. Floyd's subsequent vaporings, after he left the cabinet, misled General Scott into the belief that there had been great wrong committed while he was Secretary of War, and caused the General, in October and November, 1862, to give his sanction to charges that were quite unfounded.

It is proper to hear Mr. Buchanan himself, in regard to his refusal to garrison the Southern forts in October or November, 1860, according to the recommendations in General Scott's "views."

This refusal is attributed, without the least cause, to the influence of Governor Floyd. All my cabinet must bear me witness that I was the President myself, responsible for all the acts of the administration; and certain it is that during the last six months previous to the 29th December, 1860, the day on which he resigned his office, after my request, he exercised less influence on the administration than any other member of the cabinet. Mr. Holt was immediately thereafter transferred from the Post Office Department to that of War; so that, from this time until the 4th March, 1861, which was by far the most important period of the administration, he [Mr. Holt] performed the duties of Secretary of War to my entire satisfaction.\*

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\* Letter from Mr. Buchanan to the Editors of the *National Intelligencer*, October 28, 1862.—If the reader chooses to consult the controversy of 1862 between General Scott and Mr. Buchanan, he will find there the sources from which General Scott drew his conclusions. One of them was information given to him while the controversy was going on, in a telegram from Washington, sent by a person whose name he did not disclose. A reference to Mr. Buchanan's last letter in the controversy will show how he disposed of this "nameless telegram." The period when the alleged improper transfers of arms into the Southern States were said to have occurred was, as Mr. Buchanan states, long before the nomination of Mr. Lincoln, and nearly a year before his election. General Scott's reply to this shows that in 1862 he had convinced himself that the revolt of the Southern States had been planned for a long time before the nomination of Mr. Lincoln, and that it was to be carried out in the event of the election of any Northern man to the Presidency. It had become the fashion in 1862, in certain quarters, to believe, or to profess to believe, in this long-standing plot. There are several conclusive answers to the suggestion: 1st. It is not true, as a matter of fact, that at any time before the nomination of Mr. Lincoln, there were any transfers of arms to the South which ought to have led even to the suspicion of the existence of such a plot. 2d. That it is not true, as a matter of fact, that at any time after Mr. Lincoln's nomination, and before his election, there were any transfers of arms whatever from the Northern arsenals of the United States into the Southern States. 3d. That after Mr. Lincoln's election, viz., in December, 1860, a transfer of ordnance from Pittsburgh, in Pennsylvania, to Mississippi and Texas, which had been ordered by Secretary Floyd a few days before he left office, was immediately countermanded by his successor, Mr. Holt, by order of the President, and the guns remained at Pittsburgh. 4th. That the entire political history of the country, prior to the nomination of Mr. Lincoln, and prior to the Democratic Convention at Charleston, does not afford a rational ground of belief that any considerable section of the Southern

Finally, it only remains for me to quote Mr. Buchanan's more elaborate account of his reasons for not acting upon General

people, or any of their prominent political leaders, were looking forward to a state of parties which would be likely to result in the election of any Northern man, under circumstances that would produce a conviction among the people of the Southern States that it would be unsafe for them to remain in the Union. Even after the nomination of Mr. Lincoln, and after the division of the Democratic party into two factions, resulting in the nomination of two Democratic candidates (Breckinridge and Douglas), with a fourth candidate in the field (Bell), nominated by the "Old Line Whigs," it was not so morally certain that the Republican candidate would be elected, as to give rise, before the election, to serious plots or preparations for dissolving the Union. Mr. Lincoln obtained but a majority of fifty-seven electoral votes over all his competitors. It was the sectional character of his 180 electoral votes, out of 303,—the whole 180 being drawn from the free States,—and the sectional character of the "platform" on which he was nominated and elected, and not the naked fact that he was a Northern man, that the secessionists of the cotton States were able to use as the lever by which to carry their States out of the Union. Undoubtedly the Southern States committed the great folly of refusing to trust in the conservative elements of the North to redress any grievances of which the people of the South could justly complain. But I know of no tangible proofs that before the nomination of Mr. Lincoln there was any Southern plot to break up the Union in the event of the election of any Northern man. The reader must follow the precipitation of secession through the events occurring after the election, before he can reach a sound conclusion as to the causes and methods by which it was brought about. He will find reason to conclude, if he studies the votes in the seceding conventions of the cotton States prior to the attack on Fort Sumter, that even in that region there was a Union party which could not have been overborne and trampled down, by any other means than by appeals to unfounded fears, which the secession leaders professed to draw from the peculiar circumstances of the election. He will find reason to ask himself why it was, in these secession conventions, rapidly accomplished between December, 1860, and February, 1861, the Unionists were at last so few, and he will find the most important answer to this inquiry in the fact that it was because the advocates of secession, from the circumstances of the election, succeeded in producing the conviction that the whole North was alienated in feeling from the South, and was determined to trample upon Southern rights. It is a melancholy story of perversion, misrepresentation and mistake, operating upon a sensitive and excited people. But it does not justify the belief that the secession of those States was the accomplishment of a previous and long-standing plot to destroy the Union; nor, if such a plot ever existed, is there any reason to believe that any member of Mr. Buchanan's cabinet was a party to it. General Scott, in 1862, adopted and gave currency to charges which had no foundation in fact, and which were originated for the purpose of making Mr. Buchanan odious to the country.

The General, however, went further than the adoption of charges originated by others. He claimed credit for himself for the discovery and prevention of the "robbery" of the Pittsburgh Ordinance. In his letter of November 8, 1862, he said: "Accidentally learning, early in March (1), that, under this *posthumous* order, the shipment of these guns had commenced, I communicated the fact to Secretary Holt, acting for Secretary Cameron, just in time to defeat the robbery." This was a tissue of absurd misstatements. Copies of the official papers relating to this order are before me. The order was given by the Ordnance Office on the 22d of December, 1860. The shipment of the guns was never commenced. General Scott had nothing to do with the countermand of the order. On the 25th of December, certain citizens of Pittsburgh telegraphed to the President that great excitement had been caused there by this order, and advising that it be immediately revoked. Floyd was Secretary of War when the order was given for the removal of the guns, but at that time he was not a secessionist, or aiding the secessionists. He tendered his resignation of the office on the 29th of December, under circumstances which will be fully related hereafter. It was promptly accepted, and Mr. Holt was appointed Secretary of War *ad interim*. By the President's direction, Mr. Holt countermanded the order, and the guns remained at Pittsburgh. Judge Black, at the President's request, investigated the whole affair, and made the following

Scott's "views" of October, 1860, which he gave in the account of his administration, published in 1866.\*

Such, since the period of Mr. Lincoln's election, having been the condition of the Southern States, the "views" of General Scott, addressed before that event to the Secretary of War, on the 29th and 30th October, 1860, were calculated to do much injury in misleading the South. From the strange inconsistencies they involve, it would be difficult to estimate whether they did most harm in encouraging or in provoking secession. So far as they recommended a military movement, this, in order to secure success, should have been kept secret until the hour had arrived for carrying it into execution. The substance of them, however, soon reached the Southern people. Neither the headquarters of the army at New York, nor afterwards in Washington, were a very secure depository for the "views," even had it been the author's intention to regard them as confidential. That such was not the case may be well inferred from their very nature. Not confined to the recommendation of a military movement, by far the larger portion of them consists of a political disquisition on the existing dangers to the Union; on the horrors of civil war and the best means of averting so great a calamity; and also on the course which their author had resolved to pursue, as a citizen, in the approaching Presidential election. These were themes entirely foreign to a military report, and equally foreign from the official duties of the Commanding General. Furthermore, the "views" were published to the world by the General himself, on the 18th January, 1861, in the *National Intelligencer*, and this *without the consent or even previous knowledge of the President*. This was done at a critical moment in our history, when the cotton States were seceding one after the other. The reason assigned by him for this strange violation of official confidence toward the President, was the necessity for the correction of misapprehensions which had got abroad, "both in the public prints and in public speeches," in relation to the "views."

The General commenced his "views" by stating that, "To save time the right of secession may be conceded, and instantly balanced by the correlative right on the part of the Federal Government against an *interior* State or States to reestablish by force, if necessary, its former continuity of territory." He subsequently explains and qualifies the meaning of this phrase by saying: "It will be seen that the 'views' only apply to a case of secession that makes

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brief report to the President on the 27th: "Mr. President: The enclosed are the two orders of the War Department. I suppose the forts happened to be in that state of progress which made those guns necessary just at this time, and they were directed to be sent without any motive beyond what would have caused the same act at any other time.

Ever yours,

J. S. BLACK.

\* *Mr. Buchanan's Administration on the Eve of the Rebellion*. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1866. This book will hereafter be referred to as "*Mr. Buchanan's Defence*." The history and reasons for this publication will be found in a future chapter.

a *gap* in the present Union." The falling off (say) of Texas, or of all the Atlantic States, from the Potomac south [the very case which has since occurred], was not within the scope of General Scott's provisional remedies. As if apprehending that by possibility it might be inferred he intended to employ force for any other purpose than to open the way through this *gap* to a State beyond, still in the Union, he disclaims any such construction, and says: "The foregoing views eschew the idea of invading a seceded State." This disclaimer is as strong as any language he could employ for the purpose.

To sustain the limited right to open the way through the *gap*, he cites, not the Constitution of the United States, but the last chapter of Paley's "Moral and Political Philosophy," which, however, contains no allusion to the subject.

The General paints the horrors of civil war in the most gloomy colors, and then proposes his alternative for avoiding them. He exclaims: "But break this glorious Union by whatever line or lines that political madness may contrive, and there would be no hope of reuniting the fragments except by the laceration and despotism of the sword. To effect such result the intestine wars of our Mexican neighbors would, in comparison with ours, sink into mere child's play.

"A smaller evil" (in the General's opinion) "would be to allow the fragments of the great Republic to form themselves into new Confederacies, probably four."

Not satisfied with this general proposition, he proceeds not only to discuss and to delineate the proper boundaries for these new Confederacies, but even to designate capitals for the three on this side of the Rocky Mountains. We quote his own language as follows: "All the lines of demarcation between the new unions cannot be accurately drawn in advance, but many of them approximately may. Thus, looking to natural boundaries and commercial affinities, some of the following frontiers, after many waverings and conflicts, might perhaps become acknowledged and fixed;

"1. The Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay to the Atlantic. 2. From Maryland along the crest of the Alleghany (perhaps the Blue Ridge) range of mountains to some point on the coast of Florida. 3. The line from, say the head of the Potomac to the West or Northwest, which it will be most difficult to settle. 4. The crest of the Rocky Mountains."

"The Southeast Confederacy would, in all human probability, in less than five years after the rupture, find itself bounded by the first and second lines indicated above, the Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico, with its capital at, say Columbia, South Carolina. The country between the second, third, and fourth of those lines would, beyond a doubt, in about the same time, constitute another Confederacy, with its capital at probably Alton or Quincy, Illinois. The boundaries of the Pacific Union are the most definite of all, and the remaining States would constitute the Northeast Confederacy, with its capital at Albany. It, at the first thought, will be considered strange that seven slaveholding States and part of Virginia and Florida should be placed (above) in a new Confederacy with Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, etc. But when the overwhelm-



ing weight of the great Northwest is taken in connection with the laws of trade, contiguity of territory, and the comparative indifference to free soil doctrines on the part of Western Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Missouri, it is evident that but little if any coercion, beyond moral force, would be needed to embrace them; and I have omitted the temptation of the unwasted public lands which would fall entire to this Confederacy—an appanage (well husbanded) sufficient for many generations. As to Missouri, Arkansas, and Mississippi, they would not stand out a month. Louisiana would coalesce without much solicitation, and Alabama with West Florida would be conquered the first winter, from the absolute need of Pensacola for a naval depot."

According to this arrangement of General Scott, all that would be left for "the Northeast Confederacy" would be the New England and Middle States; and our present proud Capitol at Washington, hallowed by so many patriotic associations, would be removed to Albany.\*

It is easy to imagine with what power these "views," presented so early as October, 1860, may have been employed by the disunion leaders of the cotton States to convince the people that they might depart in peace. Proceeding from the Commanding General of the army, a citizen and a soldier so eminent, and eschewing as they did the idea of invading a seceded State, as well as favoring the substitution of new Confederacies for the old Union, what danger could they apprehend in the formation of a Southern Confederacy?

This portion of the "views," being purely political and prospective, and having no connection with military operations, was out of time and out of place in a report from the commanding General of the Army to the Secretary of War. So, also, the expression of his personal preferences among the candidates then before the people for the office of President. "From a sense of propriety as a soldier," says the General, "I have taken no part in the pending canvass, and, as always heretofore, mean to stay away from the polls. My sympathies, however, are with the Bell and Everett ticket."

After all these preliminaries, we now proceed to a different side of the picture presented by the General.

In the same "views" (the 29th October, 1860), he says that, "From a knowledge of our Southern population, it is my solemn conviction that there is some danger of an early act of rashness preliminary to secession, viz., the seizure of some or all of the following posts; Forts Jackson and St. Philip, in the Mississippi, below New Orleans, both without garrisons; Fort Morgan, below Mobile, without a garrison; Forts Pickens and McRea, Pensacola harbor, with an insufficient garrison for one; Fort Pulaski, below Savannah, without a garrison; Forts Moultrie and Sumter, Charleston harbor, the former with an insufficient garrison, and the latter without any; and Fort Monroe,

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\* It is worthy of special remark that General Scott, in his autobiography recently published, vol. ii, p. 609, entirely omits to copy this part of his views on which we have been commenting; so also his supplementary views of the next day, though together they constitute but one whole. He merely copies that which relates to garrisoning the Southern forts.

Hampton Roads, without a sufficient garrison. In my opinion all these works should be immediately so garrisoned as to make any attempt to take any one of them by surprise or *coup de main* ridiculous."

It was his duty, as commanding general, to accompany this recommendation with a practicable plan for garrisoning these forts, stating the number of troops necessary for the purpose, the points from which they could be drawn, and the manner in which he proposed to conduct the enterprise. Finding this to be impossible, from the total inadequacy of the force within the President's power to accomplish a military operation so extensive, instead of furnishing such a plan, he absolves himself from the task by simply stating in his supplemental views of the next day (30th October) that "There is one (regular) company at Boston, one here (at the Narrows), one at Pittsburg, one at Augusta, Ga., and one at Baton Rouge—in all five companies, only, within reach, to garrison or reënforce the forts mentioned in the 'views.'"

*Five companies only, four hundred men, to garrison nine fortifications scattered over six highly excited Southern States. This was all the force "within reach" so as to make any attempt to take any one of them by surprise or coup de main ridiculous.*

He even disparages the strength of this small force by applying to it the diminutive adverb "*only*," or, in other words, merely, barely. It will not be pretended that the President had any power, under the laws, to add to this force by calling forth the militia, or accepting the services of volunteers to garrison these fortifications. And the small regular army were beyond reach on our remote frontiers. Indeed, the whole American army, numbering at that time not more than sixteen thousand effective men, would have been scarcely sufficient. To have attempted to distribute these five companies among the eight forts in the cotton States, and Fortress Monroe, in Virginia, would have been a confession of weakness, instead of an exhibition of imposing and overpowering strength. It could have had no effect in preventing secession, but must have done much to provoke it. It will be recollected that these "views," the substance of which soon reached the Southern States, were written before Mr. Lincoln's election, and at a time when none of the cotton States had made the first movement toward secession. Even South Carolina was then performing all her relative duties, though most reluctantly, to the Government, whilst the border States, with Virginia in the first rank, were still faithful and true to the Union.

Under these circumstances, surely General Scott ought not to have informed them in advance that the reason why he had recommended this expedition was because, from his knowledge of them, he apprehended they might be guilty of an early act of rashness in seizing these forts before secession. This would necessarily provoke the passions of the Southern people. Virginia was deeply wounded at the imputation against her loyalty from a native though long estranged son.

Whilst one portion of the "views," as we have already seen, might be employed by disunion demagogues in convincing the people of the cotton

States that they might secede without serious opposition from the North, another portion of them was calculated to excite their indignation and drive them to extremities. From the impracticable nature of the "views," and their strange and inconsistent character, the President dismissed them from his mind without further consideration.

It is proper to inform the reader why General Scott had five companies *only* within reach for the proposed service. This was because nearly the whole of our small army was on the remote frontiers, where it had been continually employed for years in protecting the inhabitants and the emigrants on their way to the far west, against the attacks of hostile Indians. At no former period had its services been more necessary than throughout the year 1860, from the great number of these Indians continually threatening or waging war on our distant settlements. To employ the language of Mr. Benjamin Stanton, of Ohio, in his report of the 18th February, 1861, from the military committee to the House of Representatives: "The regular army numbers only 18,000 men, when recruited to its maximum strength; and the whole of this force is required upon an extended frontier, for the protection of the border settlements against Indian depredations." Indeed, the whole of it had proved insufficient for this purpose. This is established by the reports of General Scott himself to the War Department. In these he urges the necessity of raising more troops, in a striking and convincing light. In that of 20th November, 1857,\* after portraying the intolerable hardships and sufferings of the army engaged in this service, he says: "To mitigate these evils, and to enable us to give a reasonable security to our people on Indian frontiers, measuring thousands of miles, I respectfully suggest an augmentation of at least one regiment of horse (dragoons, cavalry, or riflemen) and at least three regiments of foot (infantry or riflemen). This augmentation would not more than furnish the reinforcements now greatly needed in Florida, Texas, New Mexico, California, Oregon, Washington Territory, Kansas, Nebraska, and Minnesota, leaving not a company for Utah."

Again, General Scott, in his report of November 13, 1858, says:† "This want of troops to give reasonable security to our citizens in distant settlements, including emigrants on the plains, can scarcely be too strongly stated; but I will only add, that as often as we have been obliged to withdraw troops from one frontier in order to reinforce another, the weakened points have been instantly attacked or threatened with formidable invasion."

The President, feeling the force of such appeals, and urged by the earnest entreaties of the suffering people on the frontiers, recommended to Congress, through the War Department, to raise five additional regiments.‡ This, like all other recommendations to place the country in a proper state of defence, was disregarded. From what has been stated it is manifest that it was impossible to garrison the numerous forts of the United States with regular

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\* 3 Senate Documents, 1857-'58, p. 48.

† Senate Executive Documents, 1858-'59, vol. ii., part 3, p. 761.

‡ Senate Documents, 1857-'58, vol. iii., p. 4.

troops. This will account for the destitute condition of the nine forts enumerated by General Scott, as well as of all the rest.

When our system of fortifications was planned and carried into execution, it was never contemplated to provide garrisons for them in time of peace. This would have required a large standing army, against which the American people have ever evinced a wise and wholesome jealousy. Every great republic, from the days of Cæsar to Cromwell, and from Cromwell to Bonaparte, has been destroyed by armies composed of free citizens, who had been converted by military discipline into veteran soldiers. Our fortifications, therefore, when completed, were generally left in the custody of a sergeant and a few soldiers. No fear was entertained that they would ever be seized by the States for whose defence against a foreign enemy they had been erected.

Under these circumstances it became the plain duty of the President, destitute as he was of military force, not only to refrain from any act which might provoke or encourage the cotton States into secession, but to smooth the way for such a Congressional compromise as had in times past happily averted danger from the Union. There was good reason to hope this might still be accomplished. The people of the slaveholding States must have known there could be no danger of an actual invasion of their constitutional rights over slave property from any hostile action of Mr. Lincoln's administration. For the protection of these, they could rely both on the judicial and the legislative branches of the Government. The Supreme Court had already decided the Territorial question in their favor, and it was also ascertained that there would be a majority in both Houses of the first Congress of Mr. Lincoln's term, sufficient to prevent any legislation to their injury. Thus protected, it would be madness for them to rush into secession.

Besides, they were often warned and must have known that by their separation from the free States, these very rights over slave property, of which they were so jealous, would be in greater jeopardy than they had ever been under the Government of the Union. Theirs would then be the only government in Christendom which had not abolished, or was not in progress to abolish, slavery. There would be a strong pressure from abroad against this institution. To resist this effectually would require the power and moral influence of the Government of the whole United States. They ought, also, to have foreseen that, if their secession should end in civil war, whatever might be the event, slavery would receive a blow from which it could never recover. The true policy, even in regard to the safety of their domestic institution, was to cling to the Union.

## CHAPTER XV.

1860—November.

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN—THE SECESSION OF SOUTH CAROLINA—  
NATURE OF THE DOCTRINE OF SECESSION—PRESIDENT BUCHANAN  
PREPARES TO ENCOUNTER THE SECESSION MOVEMENT—DISTINCTION  
BETWEEN MAKING WAR ON A STATE AND ENFORCING THE LAWS OF  
THE UNITED STATES.

ON the 6th of November, 1860, one hundred and eighty Republican electors of President were chosen by the people of eighteen of the free states. This determined that Abraham Lincoln was to be President of the United States for four years from the 4th of March, 1861. As soon as the result of the election was known, the legislature of South Carolina passed a law for the assembling of a convention of the people of the State on the 17th of December. The delegates to the convention were promptly chosen; and when they had been elected, it was manifest that the assumed right of secession was about to be exercised by that one of the Southern States in which attachment to the Union had been for more than thirty years confined to a few of the wiser and more considerate of her people. The great man whose political teachings had indocinated a generation with views of the Federal Constitution which, when logically carried out, would reduce it to a mere league between independent States dissoluble at the pleasure of its separate members for causes of which they were separately to judge, had passed away. I have already had occasion to observe that, while Mr. Calhoun did not at any time contemplate secession, and while he was strongly attached to the Union as he understood its fundamental principle, his political doctrines, assuming the correctness of his premises, led logically and correctly to the conclusion that the people of any State could absolve themselves from the obligation to obey the laws, and to submit to the authority of the United States. He and those

who acted with him in South Carolina during the period of "Nullification" proposed to apply this State dispensing power to a single obnoxious law of the United States, without breaking the whole bond which connected South Carolina with her sister States. But it was the inevitable result of his political principles that, if a State convention could absolve its people from the duty of obeying one law of the United States, by pronouncing it to be unconstitutional, the same authority could withdraw the State wholly from the Union, upon her judgment that to remain in it longer was incompatible with her safety or her interests. The radical vice of this whole theory was that it assumed the cession of political powers of legislation and government, made by the people of a State when they ratified the Constitution of the United States, to be revocable, not by a State power or right expressly contained in the instrument, but by a right resulting from the assumed nature of the Constitution as a compact between sovereign States. The Secession Ordinance of South Carolina, adopted on the 20th of December, 1860, which became the model of all the other similar ordinances, exhibits in a striking manner the character of the theory. It professed to "repeal" the ordinance of the State which in 1788 had ratified the Constitution of the United States, and all the subsequent acts of the legislature which had ratified the amendments of that Constitution, and to dissolve the union then subsisting between South Carolina and other States under the name of the "United States of America." In other words, the people of South Carolina, assembled in convention, determined that a cession or grant of political sovereignty, which they had made to the Government of the United States in 1788, in an irrevocable form, and without any reservation save of the powers of government which they did not grant, could yet be revoked and annulled, not by the right of revolution, but by a right resulting as a constitutional principle from a compact made between sovereign and independent political communities. This method of regarding the Government of the United States as the depositary of certain powers to be held and exercised so long as the sovereign parties to the agreement should see fit to allow them to remain, and to be withdrawn whenever one of the parties should determine to withdraw them, constituted

the whole basis of the doctrine of secession. If the premises were correct, the deduction was sound. If, on the other hand, the cession of certain powers of political sovereignty made by the people of a State when they ratified the Constitution of the United States constituted a Government, with a right to rule over the individual inhabitants of that State in the exercise of the powers conceded, the individuals could no more absolve themselves collectively, than they could separately, from the political duty and obligation to obey the laws and submit to the authority of that Government, especially when that Government contained within itself, by one of the provisions of its Constitution, both the means and the right of determining for the people of every State, whether the laws enacted by Congress were in conformity with the grants of political power embraced in the instrument which created it. The grant of the judicial power of the United States estopped the people of every State from claiming a right to pass upon the constitutional validity of any exercise of its legislative or executive authority. Such are the contrasted theories of the Constitution which were now to come into collision, after the Constitution had long been administered and acted upon as an instrument of government embracing a true and rightful sovereignty over the people of every State in the exercise of certain enumerated powers.

It is important to observe, however, that this claim of rightful sovereignty over the inhabitants of every State was not a denial of the inherent right of revolution, or the right to renounce a political allegiance, and to make that right available by physical force, in case of intolerable oppression or arbitrary assumption of power. The political institutions of this country had their origin in the exercise of the right of revolution, and however shaped or administered, they can never be made to exclude it. It is difficult, in studying the political principles on which individuals or masses of men acted, or on which they supposed themselves to be acting, during the period at which I have now arrived, to discriminate between the right of revolution and the right of secession, as distinct principles governing their personal conduct. In many minds they became blended; in many there was but little attention paid to any such distinction; in many there was nothing more than a state of excite-

ment, worked into an uncontrollable apprehension of danger which was stimulated by the political leaders of a section peculiarly exposed to such apprehensions by what had long been occurring on the dangerous subject of their social and domestic condition. But on the threshold of the secession movement, there are certain things to be carefully noted. The first is, that in the public proceedings of South Carolina, and of the other States which followed her example, it was the alleged constitutional right of secession from the Union, and not the inherent right of revolution, on which the action was professedly based. The second is, that the State of South Carolina led the way, in the hope and belief that she might compel the other cotton States to follow, while it was at least doubtful whether they would do so, and while it was manifest that their course would depend very much upon events that could not be foreseen. This condition of affairs in the months of November and December imposed upon President Buchanan two imperative duties. In the first place, he had to encounter the alleged right of secession asserted, or about to be asserted, by the State of South Carolina; to meet her public proceedings by a denial of any such right, and to exercise all the powers with which he then was, or with which he might thereafter be, clothed by Congress, to prevent any obstruction to the execution of the laws of the United States within her borders. In the next place, he had, so far as the Executive of the United States could so act, to isolate the State of South Carolina from the other States of that region, and to prevent, if possible, the spread of the secession movement. What he might be able to do in this regard would depend, of course, upon future events, and upon a careful adaptation of his means to his ends. If, notwithstanding all he could do, the fury of secession was to rapidly sweep through the cotton States, he could not prevent the formation of some kind of Southern confederacy. But the very first duty which he had to perform he proceeded promptly to execute, as soon as it was apparent that South Carolina was about to adopt an ordinance of secession. This was to encounter publicly and officially the alleged right of secession, to define clearly and explicitly to Congress and to the country the powers which he possessed, or did not possess, for meeting this exigency, and to



announce his policy. By so doing, he might prevent the spread of the secession movement, if Congress would aid him by adopting his recommendations. Preparatory to what he was about to say in his annual message to the Congress which was to assemble in the early part of December, he required from the Attorney General (Mr. Black) an official answer to the following questions :\*

1. In case of a conflict between the authorities of any State and those of the United States, can there be any doubt that the laws of the Federal Government, if constitutionally passed, are supreme?

2. What is the extent of my official power to collect the duties on imports at a port where the revenue laws are resisted by a force which drives the collector from the custom house?

3. What right have I to defend the public property (for instance, a fort, arsenal and navy yard), in case it should be assaulted?

4. What are the legal means at my disposal for executing those laws of the United States which are usually administered through the courts and their officers?

5. Can a military force be used for any purpose whatever under the Acts of 1795 and 1807, within the limits of a State where there are no judges, marshal or other civil officers?

[OPINION OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.]

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE, November 20, 1860.

SIR:—

I have had the honor to receive your note of the 17th, and I now reply to the grave questions therein propounded as fully as the time allowed me will permit.

Within their respective spheres of action, the Federal Government and the government of a State, are both of them independent and supreme, but each is utterly powerless beyond the limits assigned to it by the Constitution. If Congress would attempt to change the law of descents, to make a new rule of personal succession, or to dissolve the family relations existing in any State, the act would be simply void; but not more void than would be a State law to prevent the recapture of fugitives from labor, to forbid the carrying of the mails, or to stop the collection of duties on imports. The will of a State, whether expressed in its constitution or laws, cannot, while it remains in the Confederacy, absolve her people from the duty of obeying the just and constitutional requirements of the Central Government. Nor can any act of the

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\* The President's letter to the Attorney General, requiring his opinion on these questions, bears date on the 17th of November, 1860.

Central Government displace the jurisdiction of a State; because the laws of the United States are supreme and binding only so far as they are passed *in pursuance of the Constitution*. I do not say what might be effected by mere revolutionary force. I am speaking of legal and constitutional right.

This is the view always taken by the judiciary, and so universally adopted that the statement of it may seem commonplace. The Supreme Court of the United States has declared it in many cases. I need only refer you to the *United States vs. Booth*, where the present Chief Justice, expressing the unanimous opinion of himself and all his brethren, enunciated the doctrine in terms so clear and full that any further demonstration of it can scarcely be required.

The duty which these principles devolve, not only upon every officer, but every citizen, is that which Mr. Jefferson expressed so compendiously in his first inaugural, namely:—"to support the State Governments in all their rights as the most competent administrations for their domestic concerns, and the surest bulwarks against anti-republican tendencies," combined with "the preservation of the General Government in its whole constitutional vigor as the sheet anchor of our peace at home and safety abroad."

To the Chief Executive Magistrate of the Union is confided the solemn duty of seeing the laws faithfully executed. That he may be able to meet this duty with a power equal to its performance, he nominates his own subordinates, and removes them at his pleasure. For the same reason, the land and naval forces are under his orders as their commander-in-chief. But his power is to be used only in the manner prescribed by the legislative department. He cannot accomplish a legal purpose by illegal means, or break the laws himself to prevent them from being violated by others.

The acts of Congress sometimes give the President a broad discretion in the use of the means by which they are to be executed, and sometimes limit his power so that he can exercise it only in a certain prescribed manner. Where the law directs a thing to be done without saying how, that implies the power to use such means as may be necessary and proper to accomplish the end of the legislature. But where the mode of performing a duty is pointed out by statute, that is the exclusive mode, and no other can be followed. The United States have no common law to fall back upon when the written law is defective. If, therefore, an act of Congress declares that a certain thing shall be done by a particular officer, it cannot be done by a different officer. The agency which the law furnishes for its own execution must be used to the exclusion of all others. For instance, the revenues of the United States are to be collected in a certain way, at certain established ports, and by a certain class of officers; the President has no authority, under any circumstances, to collect the same revenues at other places by a different sort of officers, or in ways not provided for. Even if the machinery furnished by Congress for the collection of the duties should by any cause become so deranged or broken up that it could not be used, that would not be a legal reason for substituting a different kind of machinery in its place.

The law requires that all goods imported into the United States within

certain collection districts shall be entered at the proper port, and the duty thereon shall be received by the collector appointed for and residing at that port. But the functions of the collector may be exercised anywhere at or within the port. There is no law which confines him to the custom-house, or to any other particular spot. If the custom-house were burnt down, he might remove to another building; if he were driven from the shore, he might go on board a vessel in the harbor. If he keeps within the port, he is within the law.

A port is a place to which merchandise is imported, and from whence it is exported. It is created by law. It is not merely a harbor or haven, for it may be established where there is nothing but an open roadstead, or on the shore of a navigable river, or at any other place where vessels may arrive and discharge, or take in their cargoes. It comprehends the city or town which is occupied by the mariners, merchants, and others who are engaged in the business of importing and exporting goods, navigating the ships and furnishing them with provisions. It includes, also, so much of the water adjacent to the city as is usually occupied by vessels discharging or receiving their cargoes or lying at anchor and waiting for that purpose.

The first section of the act of March 2, 1833, authorized the President in a certain contingency to direct that the custom-house for any collection district be established and kept in any secure place within some port or harbor of such district, either upon land or on board any vessel. But this provision was temporary, and expired at the end of the session of Congress next afterwards. It conferred upon the Executive a right to remove the site of a custom-house not merely to any secure place within the legally established port of entry for the district—that right he had before—but it widened his authority so as to allow the removal of it to any port or harbor within the whole district. The enactment of that law, and the limitation of it to a certain period of time now passed, is not, therefore, an argument against the opinion above expressed, that you can now, if necessary, order the duties to be collected on board a vessel inside of any established port of entry. Whether the first and fifth sections of the act of 1833, both of which were made temporary by the eighth section, should be reënacted, is a question for the legislative department.

Your right to take such measures as may seem to be necessary for the protection of the public property is very clear. It results from the proprietary rights of the Government as owner of the forts, arsenals, magazines, dock-yards, navy-yards, custom-houses, public ships, and other property which the United States have bought, built, and paid for. Besides, the Government of the United States is authorized by the Constitution (Art. 1, Sec. 8) to “exercise exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever . . . over all places purchased by the consent of the legislature of the State in which the same shall be for the erection of forts, magazines, arsenals, dock-yards, and other needful buildings.” It is believed that no important public building has been bought or erected on ground where the legislature of the State in which it is,

has not passed a law consenting to the purchase of it, and ceding the exclusive jurisdiction. This Government, then, is not only the owner of those buildings and grounds, but, by virtue of the supreme and paramount law, it regulates the action and punishes the offences of all who are within them. If any one of an owner's rights is plainer than another it is that of keeping exclusive possession and repelling intrusion. The right of defending the public property includes also the right of recapture after it has been unlawfully taken by another. President Jefferson held the opinion, and acted upon it, that he could order a military force to take possession of any land to which the United States had title, though they had never occupied it before, though a private party claimed and held it, and though it was not then needed nor proposed to be used for any purpose connected with the operations of the Government. This may have been a stretch of Executive power, but the right of retaking public property in which the Government has been carrying on its lawful business, and from which its officers have been unlawfully thrust out, cannot well be doubted, and when it was exercised at Harper's Ferry, in October, 1859, everyone acknowledged the legal justice of it.

I come now to the point in your letter, which is probably of the greatest practical importance. By the act of 1807, you may employ such parts of the land and naval forces as you may judge necessary for the purpose of causing the laws to be duly executed, in all cases where it is lawful to use the militia for the same purpose. By the act of 1795 the militia may be called forth "whenever the laws of the United States shall be opposed, or the execution thereof obstructed in any State by combinations too powerful to be suppressed by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings, or by the power vested in the marshals." This imposes upon the President the sole responsibility of deciding whether the exigency has arisen which requires the use of military force; and in proportion to the magnitude of that responsibility will be his care not to overstep the limits of his legal and just authority.

The laws referred to in the act of 1795 are manifestly those which are administered by the judges, and executed by the ministerial officers of the courts for the punishment of crime against the United States, for the protection of rights claimed under the Federal Constitution and laws, and for the enforcement of such obligations as come within the cognizance of the Federal Judiciary. To compel obedience to these laws, the courts have authority to punish all who obstruct their regular administration, and the marshals and their deputies have the same powers as sheriffs and their deputies in the several States in executing the laws of the States. These are the ordinary means provided for the execution of the laws; and the whole spirit of our system is opposed to the employment of any other except in cases of extreme necessity arising out of great and unusual combinations against them. Their agency must continue to be used until their incapacity to cope with the power opposed to them shall be plainly demonstrated. It is only upon clear evidence to that effect that a military force can be called into the field. Even then its operations must be purely defensive. It can suppress only such combinations as are

found directly opposing the laws and obstructing the execution thereof. It can do no more than what might and ought to be done by a civil posse, if a civil posse could be raised large enough to meet the same opposition. On such occasions, especially, the military power must be kept in strict subordination to the civil authority, since it is only in aid of the latter that the former can act at all.

But what if the feeling in any State against the United States should become so universal that the Federal officers themselves (including judges, district attorneys and marshals) would be reached by the same influences, and resign their places? Of course, the first step would be to appoint others in their stead, if others could be got to serve. But in such an event, it is more than probable that great difficulty would be found in filling the offices. We can easily conceive how it might become altogether impossible. We are therefore obliged to consider what can be done in case we have no courts to issue judicial process, and no ministerial officers to execute it. In that event, troops would certainly be out of place, and their use wholly illegal. If they are sent to aid the courts and marshals, there must be courts and marshals to be aided. Without the exercise of those functions which belong exclusively to the civil service, the laws cannot be executed in any event, no matter what may be the physical strength which the Government has at its command. Under such circumstances, to send a military force into any State, with orders to act against the people, would be simply making war upon them.

The existing laws put and keep the Federal Government strictly on the defensive. You can use force only to repel an assault on the public property and aid the courts in the performance of their duty. If the means given you to collect the revenue and execute the other laws be insufficient for that purpose, Congress may extend and make them more effectual to those ends.

If one of the States should declare her independence, your action cannot depend upon the rightfulness of the cause upon which such declaration is based. Whether the retirement of the State from the Union be the exercise of a right reserved in the Constitution, or a revolutionary movement, it is certain that you have not in either case the authority to recognize her independence or to absolve her from her Federal obligations. Congress, or the other States in convention assembled, must take such measures as may be necessary and proper. In such an event, I see no course for you but to go straight onward in the path you have hitherto trodden—that is, execute the laws to the extent of the defensive means placed in your hands, and act generally upon the assumption that the present constitutional relations between the States and the Federal Government continue to exist, until a new code of things shall be established either by law or force.

Whether Congress has the constitutional right to make war against one or more States, and require the Executive of the Federal Government to carry it on by means of force to be drawn from the other States, is a question for Congress itself to consider. It must be admitted that no such power is expressly given; nor are there any words in the Constitution which imply it.

Among the powers enumerated in Article 1st, Section 8, is that "to declare war, grant letters of marque and reprisal, and to make rules concerning captures on land and water." This certainly means nothing more than the power to commence and carry on hostilities against the foreign enemies of the nation. Another clause in the same section gives Congress the power "to provide for calling forth the militia," and to use them within the limits of the State. But this power is so restricted by the words which immediately follow that it can be exercised only for one of the following purposes: 1. To execute the laws of the Union; that is, to aid the Federal officers in the performance of their regular duties. 2. To suppress insurrections against the State; but this is confined by Article IV, Section 4, to cases in which the State herself shall apply for assistance against her own people. 3. To repel the invasion of a State by enemies who come from abroad to assail her in her own territory. All these provisions are made to protect the States, not to authorize an attack by one part of the country upon another; to preserve the peace, and not to plunge them into civil war. Our forefathers do not seem to have thought that war was calculated "to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity." There was undoubtedly a strong and universal conviction among the men who framed and ratified the Constitution, that military force would not only be useless, but pernicious, as a means of holding the States together.

If it be true that war cannot be declared, nor a system of general hostilities carried on by the Central Government against a State, then it seems to follow that an attempt to do so would be *ipso facto* an expulsion of such State from the Union. Being treated as an alien and an enemy, she would be compelled to act accordingly. And if Congress shall break up the present Union by unconstitutionally putting strife and enmity and armed hostility between different sections of the country, instead of the domestic tranquility which the Constitution was meant to insure, will not all the States be absolved from their Federal obligations? Is any portion of the people bound to contribute their money or their blood to carry on a contest like that?

The right of the General Government to preserve itself in its whole constitutional vigor by repelling a direct and positive aggression upon its property or its officers cannot be denied. But this is a totally different thing from an offensive war to punish the people for the political misdeeds of their State government, or to enforce an acknowledgment that the Government of the United States is supreme. The States are colleagues of one another, and if some of them shall conquer the rest, and hold them as subjugated provinces, it would totally destroy the whole theory upon which they are now connected.

If this view of the subject be correct, as I think it is, then the Union must utterly perish at the moment when Congress shall arm one part of the people against another for any purpose beyond that of merely protecting the General Government in the exercise of its proper constitutional functions.

I am, very respectfully, yours, etc.,

J. S. BLACK.

The soundness of Mr. Black's answers to the questions stated by the President does not admit of a doubt. Those who have assailed him and the President who acted upon his official advice, have done so with very little regard to the supreme law of the land. They have not perceived the path in which the President had to move in the coming emergency, and they have overlooked the imperative obligation which rested upon him not to assume powers with which he had not been clothed by the Constitution and the laws. However certain it was that South Carolina would undertake to place herself out of the pale of the Union, no coercion could have been applied to her in her political capacity as a State, to prevent her from taking that step, without instantly bringing to her side every other State whose sympathies were with her on the subject of slavery, however they might hesitate in regard to secession as a remedy against the apprehensions which were common, more or less, to the people of the whole slaveholding section.<sup>1</sup> Even if the President had not been restrained by this consideration, he had no constitutional power to declare, no authority to prosecute, and no right to institute a war against a State. He could do nothing but to execute the laws of the United States within the limits of South Carolina, in case she should secede, by such means as the existing laws had placed in his hands, or such further means as the Congress which was about to assemble might see fit to give him, and to maintain the possession of the public property of the United States within the limits of that State. What the existing means were, for either of those purposes, was clearly pointed out by his official adviser, the Attorney General. For the execution of the laws, these means might wholly fail him, if the Federal civil officers in South Carolina should renounce their offices and others could not be procured to take their places. For maintaining possession of the public property of the United States, he had to act wholly upon the defensive, and at the same time he had no power to call for volunteers for this purpose, and no military force within his reach but the five companies of regular troops referred to by General Scott in his "views" presented on the 30th of October, and the naval forces at his command. No part of the army could be withdrawn from the frontiers without leaving the settlers and the emigrants

exposed to the ravages of the Indians, even if the gravest reasons of public policy had not forbidden such movements before Congress could take into consideration the whole of the unprecedented and abnormal state of the Union.

There is one part of Mr. Black's opinion on which it is proper to make some observations here, because it has a prospective bearing upon the basis on which the civil war is to be considered to have been subsequently prosecuted. It is not of much moment to inquire how individual statesmen, or publicists, or political parties, when the war had begun and was raging, regarded its legal basis; but it is of moment, in reference to the correctness of the doctrine acted upon by President Buchanan during the last four months of his administration, to consider what was the true basis of that subsequent war under the Constitution of the United States. The reader has seen that Mr. Black, in his official opinion, not only rejected the idea that the President could constitutionally make war upon a State of his own volition, but that he did not admit that the power to do so was expressly or implicitly given to Congress by the Constitution. What then did the Attorney General mean by instituting or carrying on war against one or more States? It is obvious, first, that he meant offensive war, waged against a State as if it were a foreign nation, to be carried on to the usual results of conquest and subjugation; second, that he fully admitted and maintained the right of the Federal Government to use a military force to suppress all obstructions to the execution of the laws of the United States throughout the Union, and to maintain the possession of its public property. This distinction was from the first, and always remained, of the utmost importance. It became entirely consistent with the recognition, for the time being, of a condition of territorial civil war, carried on by the lawful Government of the Union to suppress any and all military organizations arrayed against the exercise of its lawful authority; consistent with the concession of the belligerent character to the Confederate government as a *de facto* power having under its control the resources and the territory of numerous States; consistent also with the denial to that government of any character as a power *de jure*; and alike consistent with a purpose to suppress and destroy it. So far as the war subse-



quently waged was carried on upon this basis, it was carried on within the limits of the Constitution, and by the strictest constitutional right. So far as it was carried on upon any other basis, or made to result in anything more than the suppression of all unlawful obstructions to the exercise of the Federal authority throughout the Union, it was a war waged outside of the Constitution, and for objects that were not within the range of the powers bestowed by the Constitution on the Federal Government. In a word, the Federal Government had ample power under the Constitution to suppress and destroy the Confederate government and all its military array, from whatever sources that government or its military means were derived, but it had no constitutional authority to destroy a State, or to make war upon its unarmed population, as it would have under the principles of public law to destroy the political autonomy of a foreign nation with which it might be at war, or to promote hostilities against its people.

Doubtless, as will be seen hereafter when I come to speak of that part of the President's message which related to this topic of making war upon a State, the language made use of was capable of misconstruction, and certain it is that it was made the subject of abundant cavil, by those who did not wish that the President should be rightly understood; as it was also made a subject of criticism by the Attorney General when the message was submitted to the cabinet. The language chosen by the President to express his opinion on the nature and kind of power which he believed that the Constitution had not delegated to Congress, described it as a "power to coerce a State into submission which is attempting to withdraw, or has actually withdrawn from the Confederacy." This was in substance a description of the same power which the framers of the Constitution had expressly rejected. It was before the Convention of 1787 in the shape of a clause "authorizing an exertion of the force of the whole against a delinquent State," which Mr. Madison opposed as "the use of force against a State," and which he said would look more like a declaration of war than an infliction of punishment, and would probably be considered by the party attacked as a dissolution of all previous compacts by which it might be bound. On another occasion, Mr. Madison

said that "any government for the United States, formed on the supposed practicability of using force against the unconstitutional proceedings of the States, would prove as visionary and fallacious as the government of the [old] Congress." When, therefore, after the rejection of the idea of using force to restrain a State from adopting an unconstitutional proceeding, the framers of the Constitution proceeded to create a government endowed with legislative, judicial and executive power over the individual inhabitants of a State, and authorized it to use the militia to execute the laws of the Union, they made and left upon our constitutional history and jurisprudence a clear distinction between coercing a State, in its sovereign and political character, to remain in the Union, and coercing individuals to obey the laws of the Union. Mr. Buchanan might then reasonably assume, that a distinction thus clearly graven upon the constitutional records of the country would be known and recognized by all men; and although the expression to "coerce a State by force of arms to remain in the Union," might, if severed from the accompanying explanation of its meaning, be regarded as ambiguous, it will be found hereafter that it was not so used as to justify the inference that if a State were to undertake to secede from the Union, the President would disclaim or surrender the power to execute the laws of the Union within her borders. It will be found also, by adverting to the Attorney General's answers to the President's questions, that there was in truth no real difference of opinion between them on this subject.\*

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\* Mr. Jefferson Davis, who represents, with as much logical consistency as any one, the whole of the doctrine or theory of secession, has always maintained that the distinction between coercing a State, and coercing the individual inhabitants of that State to submit to the laws of the United States, is no distinction at all; that the people of the State are the State; and that to use a military force to execute the laws of the United States upon individuals, within the limits of a State that has seceded from the Union, is to make war upon the State. (See his speech in the Senate, January 10, 1861, and his recent work on the *Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government*. Index, verb. "Secession.") Let us, for a moment, inquire whether Buchanan's distinction was answered "by reason of its very absurdity."

1. The States, in their corporate and political capacity, are not the subjects or objects of Federal legislation. The legislative powers of the Federal Constitution are not intended to be exercised over States, but they are intended to be exercised over individuals. An act of Congress never commands a State to do anything; it commands private individuals to do a great many things. The States are prohibited by the Constitution from doing certain things, but these prohibitions execute themselves through the action of the judicial power upon persons. No State can be acted upon by the judicial power at the instance of the United States. Every inhabitant of a State can be acted upon by the judicial power, in regard to

anything that is within the scope of the legislative powers of the Constitution. 2. The coercion of individuals to obey the laws of the United States constitutes the great difference between our present Constitution and the Articles of Confederation. 3. The right to use force to execute the laws of the United States, by removing all obstructions to their execution, not only results from the power to legislate on the particular subject, but it is expressly recognized by the Constitution. The character of that force and the modes in which it may be employed, depend both on direct constitutional provision, and on the legislative authority over all the people of the United States in respect to certain subjects and relations. All this will be conceded to be true, so long as a State remains in the Union. Does it cease to be true, when a State interposes her sovereign will, and says that the laws of the United States shall not be executed within her limits, because she has withdrawn the powers which she deposited with the General Government? What does this make, but a new case of obstruction to the execution of the Federal laws, to be removed by acting on the individuals through whom the obstruction is practically tried? And if, in the removal of the obstruction, the use of military power becomes necessary, is war made upon the State? It is not, unless we go the whole length of saying that the interposition of the sovereign will of the State *ipso facto* makes her an independent power, erects her into a foreign nation, and makes her capable of being dealt with as one enemy is dealt with by another. To deny the right of the United States to execute its laws, notwithstanding what is called the secession of a State, is to impale one's self upon the other horn of the dilemma: for if that right does not exist, it must be because the State has become absolutely free and independent of the United States, and may be made a party to an international war. Mr. Buchanan saw and constantly and consistently acted upon the true distinction between making war upon a State, and enforcing the laws of the United States upon the inhabitants of a State.

## CHAPTER XVI.

1860—December.

THE PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL MESSAGE OF DECEMBER 3, 1860.

THE Constitution makes it the duty of the President, from time to time, to give to the Congress information of the state of the Union, and to recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient. Custom has made the commencement of each session of Congress a regular occasion for the discharge of this duty, and has also established the propriety of performing it at other times, whenever the President deems it necessary. It was the purpose of this provision of the Constitution to make the President a special guardian of the interests of the Union, by making him the official witness of its condition to the legislative department, and by giving to his recommendation of measures a high claim upon its consideration. The performance of this duty involves a wide range of observation over the whole condition of the country at a given time, and it imposes upon Congress the correlative duty of giving serious heed and prompt attention to any recommendations which the President may make. No other functionary in the Government is in a position to know so well as the President what the interests of the Union from time to time demand at the hands of Congress, and no other is clothed with this power of making official and therefore weighty recommendations of measures requiring legislative action. No state of parties, no objects of party policy, can excuse the individual members of a Congress from the duty of giving immediate attention to whatever suggestions the President may make in the exercise of this great function as the constitutional adviser of the legislature, and as guardian of the interests of

the Union. At the same time, it is to be remembered that this function is only an advisory one; that it in no way enlarges the powers of the Executive; and that the President can at no time exercise any powers but those with which he has been clothed by the Constitution or by the laws which have been passed in pursuance of its provisions.

Never was there an occasion when it was more necessary that this duty should be performed by the President firmly, intelligibly, boldly, conscientiously, than it was in the crisis existing at the commencement of the session of Congress in December, 1860. Never was it more imperatively necessary that Congress should at once take into its "consideration" the measures recommended by the President. The force of that term, as it is used in the Constitution, is not limited to a mere reference of the President's recommendations to committees. It implies action, prompt and decisive action, one way or the other, in proportion to the gravity of that condition of the Union which the President has brought to the attention of the Legislature. The President is entitled to know, and to know speedily, whether the Congress concurs with or differs from him. The country is entitled to know whether its Chief Magistrate is to be clothed with the further powers for which he may have asked in order to meet a given emergency; whether the Congress accepts, or refuses to accept, his construction of the Constitution in regard to new and difficult questions that have arisen; and whether, if the Congress does not concur with the President, it has any other policy to propose and carry out, adequate to the dangers that may be impending over the Union. An examination of the course of President Buchanan in the crisis to which we have now arrived conducts to the inquiry whether he performed his duty, as he should have done, and whether the Congress performed theirs according to the obligation that rested upon them.

The "state of the Union," of which the President had to give Congress official information, was entirely unprecedented. That it was alarming, cannot be doubted. It matters little whether the people of the North felt much alarm. Popular opinion, so far as it was not manifested by the depression of business and of the public funds, did not reflect the gravity of

the crisis. It was not generally believed that an election of a President, conducted in a regular and orderly manner, although it had resulted in the triumph of a party obnoxious to the feelings of the Southern people, because of its supposed hostility to them, would be or could be made the occasion for a permanent disruption of the Union. And this was about the only aspect in which the popular mind of the North regarded the whole matter for a considerable period after the election. It was not generally perceived that an entirely new question had arisen, which made a peril of a new and formidable nature. The alleged constitutional right of a State to withdraw itself from the Union, on its own judgment that its interests or safety were no longer compatible with its continuing as a member of it, although it had long been theoretically discussed in many ways by individuals of more or less importance, was now about to be asserted and acted upon by the people of South Carolina. How was this crisis to be met? That it was entirely out of all previous experience, that it was a situation full of peril, that it entailed the consideration of questions of Federal power never yet solved, because they had never before arisen, was plain. That the President of the United States, the official sentinel on the great watch-tower of the Union, regarded its condition as one of imminent danger, was enough for the Congress to know. That popular opinion in the North did not fully comprehend the danger affords no excuse for any omission of duty, any lack of wisdom or forethought, any failure to act promptly or patriotically, which history may find reason to impute to those who held the legislative power.

Mr. Buchanan, as the reader has seen, so soon as he had reason to believe that South Carolina was about to put in practice its alleged right of withdrawing from the Union, proceeded to take the opinion of his official adviser in regard to his constitutional powers and duties in such an emergency. Individually, he needed no man's advice upon such questions, for he was as able and well instructed a constitutional jurist as any one who had ever filled the office of President of the United States; familiar with all the teachings and all the precedents of his predecessors, and abundantly learned in the doctrines of the great judicial expounders of the Constitution. But in his offi-

cial capacity it was both proper and necessary that he should call to his aid the sound judgment and the copious learning of his Attorney General, before proceeding to discharge his constitutional duty of giving to Congress information of the state of the Union. He began to prepare his annual message immediately after he had received the Attorney General's answers to his questions. The message was read to the cabinet before it was printed in the usual form for communication to Congress. The members of the cabinet, including General Cass, the Secretary of State, and with the exceptions of Mr. Cobb, Secretary of the Treasury, and Mr. Thompson, Secretary of the Interior, warmly and emphatically approved of it.\* Messrs. Cobb and Thompson objected to so much of the message as denied the right of secession, and to that part of it which maintained the duty of defending the public property and collecting the revenue in South Carolina. These questions having now become vital, the two dissenting members of the cabinet, soon after the message had been sent to Congress, resigned their places.†

Let it be remembered, then, that this message was prepared to be submitted to Congress before the South Carolina Convention had adopted its ordinance of secession. Surely, therefore, there can be no just ground for imputing to the President any lack of preparation to meet the threatened contingency of a secession of one or more States, according to the measure of his official duty and powers. In examining this message, of which I shall speak in conformity with my most serious convictions, the reader should note that it had to be prospective in its recommendations, in order that Congress might be fully possessed of the methods of action which the President intended to propose as the legitimate, as well as the expedient, course to be pursued. But this was not the whole of the constitutional duty that rested upon the Executive. He had, in discharging his duty of giving to Congress information of the state of the Union, to treat so far of the causes which had brought about that condition as to point out measures of conciliation, as well as measures for the exercise of authority. He had to recognize the

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\* Judge Black made a criticism, which will be adverted to hereafter.

† Their resignations will be noted hereafter, as well as that of General Cass, concerning whom see the President's memorandum, *post*.

palpable fact that the two sections of the Union, the slaveholding and the non-slaveholding States, stood divided from each other upon a question which involved more of feeling than of practical consequence; a feeling that had been aggravated on each side into an undue importance by the circumstances of the late election. This question related to the claim of Southern slaveholders to have their right of property in slaves recognized in Territories of the United States, whenever they should go there with such property. It was a claim which the most considerate of those who asserted it most strongly regarded as essential to the equality of their States as members of the Union, in reference to the right of occupation of the common property of all the States. It was based, to be sure, by many who asserted it, upon a questionable proposition, which was that the right of property in a slave, recognized by the local law of a State, travelled with the person of the owner into a Territory of the United States, without any law of the Territory to uphold it, and even against a prohibition imposed by the legislative authority which governed the Territory. But when has it been known in the history of conflicting popular feelings, that the nature of such a claim has diminished the fervor with which it has been defended, when it has come to be regarded as a great political right, of importance to those who assert it? Practically, it was not a matter of importance to the slaveholding States, because there was no Territory of the United States at that time in which slave labor could become profitable, or in which the negro, in a state of slavery, could thrive. But an exaggerated feeling of the political importance of this supposed right had taken possession of the Southern mind. On the other hand, there had come about in the North an equally exaggerated sense of the importance of asserting in every possible form of public action, that the Territories were dedicated to freedom from slavery, and were to be so regarded forever. It was chiefly upon this, as a fundamental principle of the future legislation of the Union, that the Republican candidate had been elected by the votes of the people of the free States.

Under these circumstances, no President of the United States, in discharging his constitutional duty of giving to Congress information of the state of the Union, could have avoided a



reference to this condition of conflicting sectional feelings and determinations, especially at a moment when one of the Southern States was about to act upon the assumption that the election of the Northern candidate evinced a hostile disposition in the North towards the people and the social institutions of the South, too dangerous to be disregarded. If, by fairly holding the balance between the two sections, President Buchanan could suggest any course of conciliation and compromise that could be adopted without impairing the authority of the Federal Government or weakening its rights, it was his duty to point it out. The adoption of such a course by Congress would certainly smooth the way for President Lincoln, because it would leave South Carolina alone in her attitude of secession, would tend with great force to prevent any of the other cotton States from following her example, and would render a civil war extremely improbable, because it would remove one great cause for the spread of secession beyond the borders of that State. When the recommendation of the message is examined with impartiality, it will be found that it proposed an explanatory amendment of the Constitution which was entirely reasonable, and which would have terminated the existing dissensions, so far as they depended upon this particular question.

But those dissensions had other causes, which it was equally the duty of the President to bring before Congress and the country. For a long period of time, the anti-slavery agitation in the North, not confined to the question of slavery in the Territories, had awakened apprehensions in the South for their domestic peace and safety. It was undoubtedly but reasonable to expect the Southern people to rely on the conservative force of Northern public opinion, to guard against interference with slavery in the States by any form of public action through the General Government, by whatever party it might be administered. But who could insure them against the consequences of such lawless acts as John Brown's "raid" into Virginia, undertaken in 1859, with the avowed purpose of producing a slave insurrection? This occurrence, which was only a little more than a twelvemonth old when Mr. Buchanan prepared his annual message of December 3, 1860, had produced a sadder impression on the Southern people against the Union than any

previous event had ever caused.\* This painful impression was deepened by the popular honors paid in the North to this man's memory as a martyr in the cause of liberty, for whom the prayers of churches were offered, and who, after he had died the death of a felon, was canonized as a saint, mouldering in the body in the grave, but in spirit marching on to the accomplishment of his mission of liberator of the slaves. Such fanaticism might well be regarded with serious alarm by a people who dwelt surrounded in every relation of life by a slave population of another race, in many communities outnumbering the Whites. Yet this was not all that tended to alienate the people of the South from the Union. A provision of the Constitution which was adopted by its framers as a fundamental condition of the new Union that it aimed to establish, for the execution of which legislation had been provided in 1793,—legislation which bore the name of Washington himself, and which had been amended and strengthened in 1850 by a solemn Congressional agreement,—had been for seven years resisted by combinations of individuals in the North, and by State laws of obstruction that had no less of nullification as their spirit and purpose than the nullifying ordinance of South Carolina, by which she formerly undertook to obstruct another law of the Union. It was impossible for the Southern People not to place this resistance to the extradition of fugitive slaves among their grievances. It was a real grievance, and one that, considering the nature of the Constitutional mandate and stipulation, it was right that they should complain of.

Was the President of the United States, standing at the threshold of the secession movement, measuring as he was bound to do with a comprehensive grasp the condition of the Union, to be silent respecting these things? Was he, if he spoke to the South, warning her that the election of Abraham Lincoln was no cause for her attempting to leave the Union, and expounding to her the utter futility of the doctrine of secession as a constitutional right—was he to say nothing to the North of

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\* John Brown's seizure of the armory, arsenal, and rifle factory of the United States at Harper's Ferry occurred October 16, 1859.

the duty which rested upon her to remove all just causes of complaint, and thus to render secession inexcusable to the Southern people themselves? A supreme ruler, placed as Mr. Buchanan was at the period I am now considering, had a complex duty to perform. It was to prevent, if he could, the formation of any sort of Southern Confederacy among the cotton States, and thereby to relieve his successor from the necessity of having to encounter more than the secession of South Carolina. She could be dealt with easily, standing alone, if Congress would clothe the President with the necessary power to enforce the laws of the Union within her limits. Backed by a new confederacy of her contiguous sisters, containing five millions of people, and controlling the whole cotton production of the country, the problem for the new President would indeed be a formidable one. To prevent this, certain measures of conciliation were deemed by President Buchanan, in as honest and as wise a judgment as any statesman ever formed, to be essential. When the reader has examined his recommendations of constitutional amendments, along with the practical measures for which he applied, and which Congress did not adopt, he will have to ask himself, if Congress had done its duty as the President performed his, is it within the bounds of probability that Mr. Lincoln would have been embarrassed with the question about the forts in Charleston harbor, or that the Montgomery government would have ever existed, or that South Carolina, unaided and undirected by that new confederacy, would ever have fired on Sumter?

As the internal affairs of the country claimed the first attention of the President, and occupied a very large part of his message, I quote the whole of what it said on this very grave topic:

#### FELLOW-CITIZENS OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:—

Throughout the year since our last meeting, the country has been eminently prosperous in all its material interests. The general health has been excellent, our harvests have been abundant, and plenty smiles throughout the land. Our commerce and manufactures have been prosecuted with energy and industry, and have yielded fair and ample returns. In short, no nation in the tide of time has ever presented a spectacle of greater material prosperity than we have done, until within a very recent period.

Why is it, then, that discontent now so extensively prevails, and the union of the States, which is the source of all these blessings, is threatened with destruction?

> The long continued and intemperate interference of the Northern people with the question of slavery in the Southern States has at length produced its natural effects. The different sections of the Union are now arrayed against each other, and the time has arrived, so much dreaded by the Father of his Country, when hostile geographical parties have been formed.

I have long foreseen, and often forewarned my countrymen of the now impending danger. This does not proceed solely from the claim on the part of Congress or the Territorial legislatures to exclude slavery from the Territories, nor from the efforts of different States to defeat the execution of the fugitive slave law. All or any of these evils might have been endured by the South, without danger to the Union (as others have been), in the hope that time and reflection might apply the remedy. The immediate peril arises, not so much from these causes, as from the fact that the incessant and violent agitation of the slavery question throughout the North for the last quarter of a century has at length produced its malign influence on the slaves, and inspired them with vague notions of freedom. Hence a sense of security no longer exists around the family altar. This feeling of peace at home has given place to apprehensions of servile insurrections. Many a matron throughout the South retires at night in dread of what may befall herself and her children before the morning. Should this apprehension of domestic danger, whether real or imaginary, extend and intensify itself, until it shall pervade the masses of the Southern people, then disunion will become inevitable. Self-preservation is the first law of nature, and has been implanted in the heart of man by his Creator for the wisest purpose; and no political union, however fraught with blessings and benefits in all other respects, can long continue, if the necessary consequence be to render the homes and the fire-sides of nearly half the parties to it habitually and hopelessly insecure. Sooner or later the bonds of such a Union must be severed. It is my conviction that this fatal period has not yet arrived; and my prayer to God is, that he would preserve the Constitution and the Union throughout all generations.

But let us take warning in time, and remove the cause of danger. It cannot be denied that for five and twenty years the agitation at the North against slavery has been incessant. In 1835, pictorial handbills and inflammatory appeals were circulated extensively throughout the South, of a character to excite the passions of the slaves, and, in the language of General Jackson, "to stimulate them to insurrection and produce all the horrors of a servile war." This agitation has ever since been continued by the public press, by the proceedings of State and county conventions, and by abolition sermons and lectures. The time of Congress has been occupied in violent speeches on this never ending subject; and appeals, in pamphlet and other forms, indorsed by distinguished names, have been sent forth from this central point and spread broadcast over the Union.

How easy would it be for the American people to settle the slavery question forever, and to restore peace and harmony to this distracted country! They, and they alone, can do it. All that is necessary to accomplish the object, and all for which the slave States have ever contended, is to be let alone and permitted to manage their domestic institutions in their own way. As sovereign States, they, and they alone, are responsible before God and the world for the slavery existing among them. For this the people of the North are not more responsible, and have no more right to interfere, than with similar institutions in Russia or in Brazil.

Upon their good sense and patriotic forbearance, I confess, I still greatly rely. Without their aid it is beyond the power of any President, no matter what may be his own political proclivities, to restore peace and harmony among the States. Wisely limited and restrained as is his power under our Constitution and laws, he alone can accomplish but little for good or for evil on such a momentous question.

And this brings me to observe, that the election of any one of our fellow-citizens to the office of President does not of itself afford just cause for dissolving the Union. This is more especially true if his election has been effected by a mere plurality and not a majority of the people, and has resulted from transient and temporary causes, which may probably never again occur. In order to justify a resort to revolutionary resistance, the Federal Government must be guilty of "a deliberate, palpable, and dangerous exercise" of powers not granted by the Constitution. The late Presidential election, however, has been held in strict conformity with its express provisions. How, then, can the result justify a revolution to destroy this very Constitution? Reason, justice, a regard for the Constitution, all require that we shall wait for some overt and dangerous act on the part of the President elect, before resorting to such a remedy. It is said, however, that the antecedents of the President elect have been sufficient to justify the fears of the South that he will attempt to invade their constitutional rights. But are such apprehensions of contingent danger in the future sufficient to justify the immediate destruction of the noblest system of government ever devised by mortals? From the very nature of his office, and its high responsibilities, he must necessarily be conservative. The stern duty of administering the vast and complicated concerns of this Government affords in itself a guarantee that he will not attempt any violation of a clear constitutional right.

After all, he is no more than the Chief Executive officer of the Government. His province is not to make but to execute the laws; and it is a remarkable fact in our history that, notwithstanding the repeated efforts of the anti-slavery party, no single act has ever passed Congress, unless we may possibly except the Missouri Compromise, impairing in the slightest degree the rights of the South to their property in slaves. And it may also be observed, judging from present indications, that no probability exists of the passage of such an act by a majority of both Houses, either in the present or the next Congress. Surely, under these circumstances, we ought to be restrained from present action by

the precept of Him who spake as man never spoke, that "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." The day of evil may never come unless we shall rashly bring it upon ourselves.

It is alleged as one cause for immediate secession, that the Southern States are denied equal rights with the other States in the common Territories. But by what authority are these denied? Not by Congress, which has never passed, and I believe never will pass, any act to exclude slavery from these Territories. And certainly not by the Supreme Court, which has solemnly decided that slaves are property, and like all other property their owners have a right to take them into the common Territories and hold them there under the protection of the Constitution.

So far, then, as Congress is concerned, the objection is not to anything they have already done, but to what they may do hereafter. It will surely be admitted that this apprehension of future danger is no good reason for an immediate dissolution of the Union. It is true that the Territorial legislature of Kansas, on the 23d February, 1860, passed in great haste an act over the veto of the Governor, declaring that slavery "is and shall be forever prohibited in this Territory." Such an act, however, plainly violating the rights of property secured by the Constitution, will surely be declared void by the judiciary, whenever it shall be presented in a legal form.

Only three days after my inauguration, the Supreme Court of the United States solemnly adjudged that this power did not exist in a Territorial legislature. Yet such has been the factious temper of the times that the correctness of this decision has been extensively impugned before the people, and the question has given rise to angry political conflicts throughout the country. Those who have appealed from this judgment of our highest constitutional tribunal to popular assemblies, would, if they could, invest a Territorial legislature with power to annul the sacred rights of property. This power Congress is expressly forbidden by the Federal Constitution to exercise. Every State legislature in the Union is forbidden by its own constitution to exercise it. It cannot be exercised in any State except by the people in their highest sovereign capacity when framing or amending their State constitution. In like manner it can only be exercised by the people of a Territory, represented in a convention of delegates, for the purpose of framing a constitution preparatory to admission as a State into the Union. Then, and not until then, are they invested with power to decide the question whether slavery shall or shall not exist within their limits. This is an act of sovereign authority and not of subordinate Territorial legislation. Were it otherwise, then indeed would the equality of the States in the Territories be destroyed and the rights of property in slaves would depend not upon the guarantees of the Constitution, but upon the shifting majorities of an irresponsible Territorial legislature. Such a doctrine, from its intrinsic unsoundness, cannot long influence any considerable portion of our people, much less can it afford a good reason for a dissolution of our Union.

The most palpable violations of constitutional duty which have yet been

committed consist in the acts of different State legislatures to defeat the execution of the fugitive slave law. It ought to be remembered, however, that for these acts neither Congress nor any President can justly be held responsible. Having been passed in violation of the Federal Constitution, they are therefore null and void. All the courts, both State and national, before whom the question has arisen, have, from the beginning, declared the fugitive slave law to be constitutional. The single exception is that of a State court in Wisconsin; and this has not only been reversed by the proper appellate tribunal, but has met with such universal reprobation, that there can be no danger from it as a precedent. The validity of this law has been established over and over again by the Supreme Court of the United States with unanimity. It is founded upon an express provision of the Constitution, requiring that fugitive slaves who escape from service in one State to another shall be "delivered up" to their masters. Without this provision, it is a well known historical fact that the Constitution itself could never have been adopted by the convention. In one form or other, under the acts of 1793 and 1850, both being substantially the same, the fugitive slave law has been the law of the land from the days of Washington until the present moment. Here, then, a clear case is presented, in which it will be the duty of the next President, as it has been my own, to act with vigor in executing this supreme law against the conflicting enactments of State legislatures. Should he fail in the performance of this high duty, he will then have manifested a disregard of the Constitution and laws, to the great injury of the people of nearly one-half of the States of the Union. But are we to presume in advance that he will thus violate his duty? This would be at war with every principle of justice and of Christian charity. Let us wait for the overt act. The fugitive slave law has been carried into execution in every contested case since the commencement of the present administration; though often, it is to be regretted, with great loss and inconvenience to the master, and with considerable expense to the Government. Let us trust that the State legislatures will repeal their unconstitutional and obnoxious enactments. Unless this shall be done without unnecessary delay, it is impossible for any human power to save the Union.

The Southern States, standing on the basis of the Constitution, have a right to demand this act of justice from the States of the North. Should it be refused, then the Constitution, to which all the States are parties, will have been wilfully violated by one portion of them in a provision essential to the domestic security and happiness of the remainder. In that event, the injured States, after having first used all peaceful and constitutional means to obtain redress, would be justified in revolutionary resistance to the Government of the Union.

I have purposely confined my remarks to revolutionary resistance, because it has been claimed within the last few years that any State, whenever this shall be its sovereign will and pleasure, may secede from the Union in accordance with the Constitution, and without any violation of the constitutional

rights of the other members of the Confederacy. That as each became parties to the Union by the vote of its own people assembled in convention, so any one of them may retire from the Union in a similar manner by the vote of such a convention.

In order to justify secession as a constitutional remedy, it must be on the principle that the Federal Government is a mere voluntary association of States, to be dissolved at pleasure by any one of the contracting parties. If this be so, the Confederacy is a rope of sand, to be penetrated and dissolved by the first adverse wave of public opinion in any of the States. In this manner our thirty-three States may resolve themselves into as many petty, jarring, and hostile republics, each one retiring from the Union without responsibility whenever any sudden excitement might impel them to such a course. By this process a Union might be entirely broken into fragments in a few weeks, which cost our forefathers many years of toil, privation, and blood to establish.

Such a principle is wholly inconsistent with the history as well as the character of the Federal Constitution. After it was framed, with the greatest deliberation and care, it was submitted to conventions of the people of the several States for ratification. Its provisions were discussed at length in these bodies, composed of the first men of the country. Its opponents contended that it conferred powers upon the Federal Government dangerous to the rights of the States, whilst its advocates maintained that, under a fair construction of the instrument, there was no foundation for such apprehensions. In that mighty struggle between the first intellects of this or any other country, it never occurred to any individual, either among its opponents or advocates, to assert or even to intimate that their efforts were all vain labor, because the moment that any State felt herself aggrieved she might secede from the Union. What a crushing argument would this have proved against those who dreaded that the rights of the States would be endangered by the Constitution. The truth is, that it was not until many years after the origin of the Federal Government that such a proposition was first advanced. It was then met and refuted by the conclusive arguments of General Jackson, who, in his message of the 16th January, 1833, transmitting the nullifying ordinance of South Carolina to Congress, employs the following language: "The right of the people of a single State to absolve themselves at will, and without the consent of the other States, from their most solemn obligations, and hazard the liberty and happiness of the millions composing this Union, cannot be acknowledged. Such authority is believed to be utterly repugnant both to the principles upon which the General Government is constituted, and to the objects which it was expressly formed to attain."

It is not pretended that any clause in the Constitution gives countenance to such a theory. It is altogether founded upon inference, not from any language contained in the instrument itself, but from the sovereign character of the several States by which it was ratified. But is it beyond the power of a State, like an individual, to yield a portion of its sovereign rights to secure



the remainder? In the language of Mr. Madison, who has been called the father of the Constitution, "It was formed by the States—that is, by the people in each of the States acting in their highest sovereign capacity, and formed, consequently, by the same authority which formed the State constitutions. Nor is the Government of the United States, created by the Constitution, less a government, in the strict sense of the term, within the sphere of its powers, than the governments created by the constitutions of the States are within their several spheres. It is, like them, organized into legislative, executive, and judiciary departments. It operates, like them, directly on persons and things; and, like them, it has at command a physical force for executing the powers committed to it."

It was intended to be perpetual, and not to be annulled at the pleasure of any one of the contracting parties. The old articles of confederation were entitled "Articles of confederation and perpetual union between the States;" and by the thirteenth article it is expressly declared that "the articles of this confederation shall be inviolably observed by every State, and the union shall be perpetual." The preamble to the Constitution of the United States, having express reference to the articles of confederation, recites that it was established "in order to form a more perfect union." And yet it is contended that this "more perfect union" does not include the essential attribute of perpetuity.

But that the Union was designed to be perpetual, appears conclusively from the nature and extent of the powers conferred by the Constitution on the Federal Government. These powers embrace the very highest attributes of national sovereignty. They place both the sword and the purse under its control. Congress has power to make war and to make peace; to raise and support armies and navies, and to conclude treaties with foreign governments. It is invested with the power to coin money, and to regulate the value thereof, and to regulate commerce with foreign nations and among the several States. It is not necessary to enumerate the other high powers which have been conferred upon the Federal Government. In order to carry the enumerated powers into effect, Congress possesses the exclusive right to lay and collect duties on imports, and, in common with the States, to lay and collect all other taxes.

But the Constitution has not only conferred these high powers upon Congress, but it has adopted effectual means to restrain the States from interfering with their exercise. For that purpose it has in strong prohibitory language expressly declared that "no State shall enter into any treaty, alliance, or confederation; grant letters of marque and reprisal; coin money; emit bills of credit; make anything but gold and silver coin a tender in payment of debts; pass any bill of attainder, *ex post facto* law, or law impairing the obligation of contracts." Moreover, "without the consent of Congress no State shall lay any imposts or duties on any imports or exports, except what may be absolutely necessary for executing its inspection laws," and if they exceed this amount, the excess shall belong to the United States. And "no State

shall, without the consent of Congress, lay any duty of tonnage, keep troops or ships of war in time of peace, enter into any agreement or compact with another State, or with a foreign power, or engage in war, unless actually invaded, or in such imminent danger as will not admit of delay."

In order still further to secure the uninterrupted exercise of these high powers against State interposition, it is provided "that this Constitution and the laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof, and all treaties made or which shall be made under the authority of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land; and the judges in every State shall be bound thereby, anything in the constitution or laws of any State to the contrary notwithstanding."

The solemn sanction of religion has been superadded to the obligations of official duty, and all Senators and Representatives of the United States, all members of State legislatures, and all executive and judicial officers, "both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by oath or affirmation to support this Constitution."

In order to carry into effect these powers, the Constitution has established a perfect Government in all its forms, legislative, executive, and judicial; and this Government to the extent of its powers acts directly upon the individual citizens of every State, and executes its own decrees by the agency of its own officers. In this respect it differs entirely from the government under the old confederation, which was confined to making requisitions on the States in their sovereign character. This left in the discretion of each whether to obey or to refuse, and they often declined to comply with such requisitions. It thus became necessary for the purpose of removing this barrier, and, "in order to form a more perfect union," to establish a Government which could act directly upon the people and execute its own laws without the intermediate agency of the States. This has been accomplished by the Constitution of the United States. In short, the Government created by the Constitution, and deriving its authority from the sovereign people of each of the several States, has precisely the same right to exercise its power over the people of all these States in the enumerated cases, that each one of them possesses over subjects not delegated to the United States, but "reserved to the States respectively or to the people."

To the extent of the delegated powers the Constitution of the United States is as much a part of the constitution of each State, and is as binding upon its people, as though it had been textually inserted therein.

This Government, therefore, is a great and powerful government, invested with all the attributes of sovereignty over the special subjects to which its authority extends. Its framers never intended to implant in its bosom the seeds of its own destruction, nor were they at its creation guilty of the absurdity of providing for its own dissolution. It was not intended by its framers to be the baseless fabric of a vision, which, at the touch of the enchanter, would vanish into thin air, but a substantial and mighty fabric, capable of resisting the slow decay of time, and of defying the storms of ages. Indeed,

well may the jealous patriots of that day have indulged fears that a government of such high powers might violate the reserved rights of the States, and wisely did they adopt the rule of a strict construction of these powers to prevent the danger. But they did not fear, nor had they any reason to imagine that the Constitution would ever be so interpreted as to enable any State by her own act, and without the consent of her sister States, to discharge her people from all or any of the federal obligations.

It may be asked, then, are the people of the States without redress against the tyranny and oppression of the Federal Government? By no means. The right of resistance on the part of the governed against the oppression of their governments cannot be denied. It exists independently of all constitutions, and has been exercised at all periods of the world's history. Under it, old governments have been destroyed and new ones have taken their place. It is embodied in strong and express language in our own Declaration of Independence. But the distinction must ever be observed that this is revolution against an established government, and not a voluntary secession from it by virtue of an inherent constitutional right. In short, let us look the danger fairly in the face; secession is neither more nor less than revolution. It may or it may not be a justifiable revolution; but still it is revolution.

What, in the meantime, is the responsibility and true position of the Executive? He is bound by solemn oath, before God and the country, "to take care that the laws be faithfully executed," and from this obligation he cannot be absolved by any human power. But what if the performance of this duty, in whole or in part, has been rendered impracticable by events over which he could have exercised no control? Such, at the present moment, is the case throughout the State of South Carolina, so far as the laws of the United States to secure the administration of justice by means of the federal judiciary are concerned. All the federal officers within its limits, through whose agency alone these laws can be carried into execution, have already resigned. We no longer have a district judge, a district attorney, or a marshal in South Carolina. In fact, the whole machinery of the Federal Government necessary for the distribution of remedial justice among the people has been demolished, and it would be difficult, if not impossible, to replace it.

The only acts of Congress on the statute book, bearing upon this subject, are those of the 28th February, 1795, and 3d March, 1807. These authorize the President, after he shall have ascertained that the marshal, with his *posse comitatus*, is unable to execute civil or criminal process in any particular case, to call forth the militia and employ the army and navy to aid him in performing this service, having first by proclamation commanded the insurgents "to disperse and retire peaceably to their respective abodes within a limited time." This duty cannot by possibility be performed in a State where no judicial authority exists to issue process, and where there is no marshal to execute it, and where, even if there were such an officer, the entire population would constitute one solid combination to resist him.

The bare enumeration of these provisions proves how inadequate they are,

without further legislation, to overcome a united opposition in a single State, not to speak of other States who may place themselves in a similar attitude. Congress alone has power to decide whether the present laws can or cannot be amended so as to carry out more effectually the objects of the Constitution.

The same insuperable obstacles do not lie in the way of executing the laws for the collection of the customs. The revenue still continues to be collected, as heretofore, at the custom-house in Charleston, and should the collector unfortunately resign, a successor may be appointed to perform this duty.

Then, in regard to the property of the United States in South Carolina. This has been purchased, for a fair equivalent, "by the consent of the legislature of the State," "for the erection of forts, magazines, arsenals," etc., and over these the authority "to exercise exclusive legislation," has been expressly granted by the Constitution to Congress. It is not believed that any attempt will be made to expel the United States from this property by force; but if in this I should prove to be mistaken, the officer in command of the forts has received orders to act strictly on the defensive. In such a contingency the responsibility for consequences would rightfully rest upon the heads of the assailants.

Apart from the execution of the laws, so far as this may be practicable, the Executive has no authority to decide what shall be the relations between the Federal Government and South Carolina. He has been invested with no such discretion. He possesses no power to change the relations heretofore existing between them, much less to acknowledge the independence of that State. This would be to invest a mere executive officer with the power of recognizing the dissolution of the Confederacy among our thirty-three sovereign States. It bears no resemblance to the recognition of a foreign *de facto* government, involving no such responsibility. Any attempt to do this would, on his part, be a naked act of usurpation. It is, therefore, my duty to submit to Congress the whole question in all its bearings. The course of events is so rapidly hastening forward that the emergency may soon arise when you may be called upon to decide the momentous question whether you possess the power, by force of arms, to compel a State to remain in the Union. I should feel myself recreant to my duty were I not to express an opinion on this important subject.

The question fairly stated is: Has the Constitution delegated to Congress the power to coerce a State into submission which is attempting to withdraw, or has actually withdrawn, from the Confederacy? If answered in the affirmative, it must be on the principle that the power has been conferred upon Congress to declare and to make war against a State. After much serious reflection, I have arrived at the conclusion that no such power has been delegated to Congress or to any other department of the Federal Government. It is manifest, upon an inspection of the Constitution, that this is not among the specific and enumerated powers granted to Congress; and it is equally apparent that its exercise is not "necessary and proper for carrying into execution" any one of these powers. So far from this power having been delegated to

Congress, it was expressly refused by the convention which framed the Constitution.

It appears from the proceedings of that body that on the 31st May, 1787, the clause "*authorizing an exertion of the force of the whole against a delinquent State,*" came up for consideration. Mr. Madison opposed it in a brief but powerful speech, from which I shall extract but a single sentence. He observed: "The use of force against a State would look more like a declaration of war than an infliction of punishment, and would probably be considered by the party attacked as a dissolution of all previous compacts by which it might be bound." Upon his motion the clause was unanimously postponed, and was never, I believe, again presented. Soon afterwards, on the 8th June, 1787, when incidentally adverting to the subject, he said: "Any government for the United States, formed on the supposed practicability of using force against the unconstitutional proceedings of the States, would prove as visionary and fallacious as the Government of Congress," evidently meaning the then existing Congress of the old Confederation.

Without descending to particulars, it may be safely asserted that the power to make war against a State is at variance with the whole spirit and intent of the Constitution. Suppose such a war should result in the conquest of a State, how are we to govern it afterwards? Shall we hold it as a province and govern it by despotic power? In the nature of things we could not, by physical force, control the will of the people and compel them to elect Senators and Representatives to Congress, and to perform all the other duties depending upon their own volition, and required from the free citizens of a free State as a constituent member of the Confederacy.

But, if we possessed this power, would it be wise to exercise it under existing circumstances? The object would doubtless be to preserve the Union. War would not only present the most effectual means of destroying it, but would banish all hope of its peaceful reconstruction. Besides, in the fraternal conflict a vast amount of blood and treasure would be expended, rendering future reconciliation between the States impossible. In the meantime, who can foretell what would be the sufferings and privations of the people during its existence?

The fact is, that our Union rests upon public opinion, and can never be cemented by the blood of its citizens shed in civil war. If it cannot live in the affections of the people, it must one day perish. Congress possesses many means of preserving it by conciliation; but the sword was not placed in their hand to preserve it by force.

But may I be permitted solemnly to invoke my countrymen to pause and deliberate, before they determine to destroy this, the grandest temple which has ever been dedicated to human freedom since the world began. It has been consecrated by the blood of our fathers, by the glories of the past, and by the hopes of the future. The Union has already made us the most prosperous, and ere long will, if preserved, render us the most powerful nation on the face of the earth. In every foreign region of the globe the title of American

citizen is held in the highest respect, and when pronounced in a foreign land it causes the hearts of our countrymen to swell with honest pride. Surely, when we reach the brink of the yawning abyss, we shall recoil with horror from the last fatal plunge.

By such a dread catastrophe, the hopes of the friends of freedom throughout the world would be destroyed, and a long night of leaden despotism would enshroud the nations. Our example for more than eighty years would not only be lost, but it would be quoted as conclusive proof that man is unfit for self-government.

It is not every wrong—nay, it is not every grievous wrong—which can justify a resort to such a fearful alternative. This ought to be the last desperate remedy of a despairing people, after every other constitutional means of conciliation had been exhausted. We should reflect that, under this free Government, there is an incessant ebb and flow in public opinion. The slavery question, like everything human, will have its day. I firmly believe that it has reached and passed the culminating point. But if, in the midst of the existing excitement, the Union shall perish, the evil may then become irreparable.

Congress can contribute much to avert it, by proposing and recommending to the legislatures of the several States the remedy for existing evils which the Constitution has itself provided for its own preservation. This has been tried at different critical periods of our history, and always with eminent success. It is to be found in the fifth article, providing for its own amendment. Under this article, amendments have been proposed by two-thirds of both Houses of Congress, and have been “ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States,” and have consequently become parts of the Constitution. To this process the country is indebted for the clause prohibiting Congress from passing any law respecting an establishment of religion, or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press, or of the right of petition. To this we are, also, indebted for the Bill of Rights, which secures the people against any abuse of power by the Federal Government. Such were the apprehensions justly entertained by the friends of State rights at that period as to have rendered it extremely doubtful whether the Constitution could have long survived without those amendments.

Again, the Constitution was amended by the same process, after the election of President Jefferson by the House of Representatives, in February, 1803. This amendment was rendered necessary to prevent a recurrence of the dangers which had seriously threatened the existence of the Government during the pendency of that election. The article for its own amendment was intended to secure the amicable adjustment of conflicting constitutional questions like the present, which might arise between the governments of the States and that of the United States. This appears from contemporaneous history. In this connection, I shall merely call attention to a few sentences in Mr. Madison's justly celebrated report, in 1799, to the legislature of Virginia. In this, he ably and conclusively defended the resolutions of the preceding

legislature, against the strictures of several other State legislatures. These were mainly founded upon the protest of the Virginia legislature against the "alien and sedition acts," as "palpable and alarming infractions of the Constitution." In pointing out the peaceful and constitutional remedies—and he referred to none other—to which the States were authorized to resort on such occasions, he concludes by saying, "that the legislatures of the States might have made a direct representation to Congress, with a view to obtain a rescinding of the two offensive acts, or they might have represented to their respective Senators in Congress, their wish that two-thirds thereof would propose an explanatory amendment to the Constitution, or two-thirds of themselves, if such had been their option, might by an application to Congress, have obtained a convention for the same object." This is the very course which I earnestly recommend, in order to obtain an "explanatory amendment" of the Constitution on the subject of slavery. This might originate with Congress or the State legislatures, as may be deemed most advisable to attain the object.

The explanatory amendment might be confined to the final settlement of the true construction of the Constitution on three special points:

1. An express recognition of the right of property in slaves in the States where it now exists or may hereafter exist.

2. The duty of protecting this right in all the common Territories throughout their Territorial existence, and until they shall be admitted as States into the Union, with or without slavery, as their constitutions may prescribe.

3. A like recognition of the right of the master to have his slave, who has escaped from one State to another, restored and "delivered up" to him, and of the validity of the fugitive slave law enacted for this purpose, together with a declaration that all State laws impairing or defeating this right, are violations of the Constitution, and are consequently null and void. It may be objected that this construction of the Constitution has already been settled by the Supreme Court of the United States, and what more ought to be required? The answer is, that a very large proportion of the people of the United States still contest the correctness of this decision, and never will cease from agitation, and admit its binding force, until clearly established by the people of the several States in their sovereign character. Such an explanatory amendment would, it is believed, forever terminate the existing dissensions, and restore peace and harmony among the States.

It ought not to be doubted that such an appeal to the arbitrament established by the Constitution itself would be received with favor by all the States of the Confederacy. In any event, it ought to be tried in a spirit of conciliation before any of these States shall separate themselves from the Union.

When I entered upon the duties of the Presidential office, the aspect neither of our foreign nor domestic affairs was at all satisfactory. We were involved in dangerous complications with several nations, and two of our Territories were in a state of revolution against the Government. A restoration of the African slave trade had numerous and powerful advocates.

Unlawful military expeditions were countenanced by many of our citizens, and were suffered, in defiance of the efforts of the Government, to escape from our shores for the purpose of making war upon the unoffending people of neighboring republics with whom we were at peace. In addition to these and other difficulties, we experienced a revulsion in monetary affairs, soon after my advent to power, of unexampled severity, and of ruinous consequences to all the great interests of the country. When we take a retrospect of what was then our condition, and contrast this with its material prosperity at the time of the late Presidential election, we have abundant reason to return our grateful thanks to that merciful Providence which has never forsaken us as a nation in all our past trials.

With respect to the supposed right of secession as a deduction from the nature of the Union, as established by the Constitution—a theory on which the secessionists from the first desired the whole issue to be based, with all its resulting consequences—I shall close this chapter with the remark that, after a long familiarity with our constitutional literature, I know of no document which, within the same compass, states so clearly and accurately what I regard as the true theory of our Constitution, as this message of President Buchanan. Had I the power to change it, I would not alter a word. The President, after stating a case which might justify revolution under this as under all other governments, after all peaceful and constitutional means to obtain redress had been exhausted, proceeded to discuss the supposed constitutional right of secession, with the power of a statesman and the precision of a jurist.\*

Among all the reproaches that have been cast upon President Buchanan, none has been more persistently repeated than that which has imputed to him a “temporizing policy;” and the doctrine on which he denied that the Federal Government could make aggressive war upon a State for the purpose of preventing her from seceding from the Union, has been represented as the strongest proof of his want of the vigor necessary for the

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\* Mr. Buchanan, in constructing this great argument, doubtless had very important sources from which to draw his reasoning, in Mr. Webster's replies to Mr. Hayne and Mr. Calhoun, in General Jackson's great proclamation and message in the time of nullification, in the decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States, in the writings of Hamilton, Madison and others of the early expounders of the Constitution. But who can justly deny to him the merit of concentrating his materials into a powerful statement of that theory of our Constitution on which the rightfulness of the late civil war must rest in history, or be left without any justification but the power of numbers and the principle that might makes right !



emergency. Little are the objectors aware that the policy of Mr. Lincoln's administration, until after the attack on Fort Sumter, was identical with that of Mr. Buchanan. Mr. Lincoln's policy was largely shaped by his Secretary of State, Mr. Seward; and there can be no better authority than Mr. Seward's for proof of that policy.\*

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\* The following extracts are taken from an official letter addressed by Mr. Seward, as Secretary of State, to Mr. C. F. Adams, who had just gone abroad as United States Minister to England. The letter bears date April 10th, 1861. "You will hardly be asked by responsible statesmen abroad, why has not the new administration already suppressed the revolution. Thirty-five days are a short period in which to repress, chiefly by moral means, a movement which is so active whilst disclosing itself throughout an empire . . . . He (President Lincoln) believes that the citizens of those States, as well as the citizens of the other States, are too intelligent, considerate, and wise to follow the leaders to that destructive end (anarchy). For these reasons, he would not be disposed to reject a cardinal dogma of theirs, namely, that the Federal Government could not reduce the seceding States to obedience by conquest, even although he were disposed to question that proposition. But, in fact, the President willingly accepts it as true. Only an imperial and despotic government could subjugate thoroughly disaffected and insurrectionary members of the state. This federal, republican country of ours is of all forms of government the very one which is most unfitted for such a labor. Happily, however, this is only an imaginary defect. The system has within itself adequate, peaceful, conservative and recuperative forces. Firmness on the part of the Government in maintaining and preserving the public institutions and property, and in executing the laws where authority can be exercised without waging war, combined with such measures of justice, moderation and forbearance as will disarm reasoning opposition, will be sufficient to secure the public safety, until returning reflection, concurring with the fearful experience of social evils, the inevitable fruits of faction, shall bring the recusant members cheerfully into the family, which, after all, must prove their best and happiest, as it undeniably is their most natural home." He then goes on to show that the calling of a national convention, by authority of Congress, will remove all real obstacles to a re-union, by revising the Constitution, and he adds: "Keeping that remedy steadily in view, the President on the one hand will not suffer the Federal authority to fall into abeyance, nor will he on the other hand aggravate existing evils by attempts at coercion which must assume the form of direct war against any of the revolutionary States." It is impossible for human ingenuity to draw a sensible distinction between the policy of President Lincoln, as laid down by Mr. Seward just before the attack on Fort Sumter, and the policy adopted and steadily pursued by President Buchanan; and it is to be hoped that the world will hereafter hear no more reproaches of President Buchanan, because he denied the authority of the Federal Government to make aggressive war upon a State to compel it to remain in the Union, or because he proposed conciliatory measures looking to an amendment of the Constitution.

## CHAPTER XVII.

1860—December.

RECEPTION OF THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE IN THE CABINET, IN CONGRESS,  
AND IN THE COUNTRY—THE FIRM ATTITUDE AND WISE POLICY OF  
MR. BUCHANAN.

REFERENCE has already been made to what took place when this annual message was read to the cabinet, before it was transmitted to Congress. Recent revelations made by Judge Black in the public prints disclose the nature of an objection made by him to the expression "to coerce a State into submission, which is attempting to withdraw, or has actually withdrawn, from the Confederacy." His criticism did not apply to the legal proposition of the message, in which he entirely concurred; but his apprehension was that the expression would be read superficially, and be misunderstood. The President did not think so, nor did the other members of the cabinet. It is only necessary for me to repeat that the message clearly and unequivocally pointed out that the coercive power of the Federal Government was necessarily confined and must be applied to the execution upon individuals of the laws of the United States; and that it explicitly stated, with proper references to the proceedings of the framers of the Constitution, that a power to coerce a State by force of arms was expressly rejected by them, since it would, if applied, be equivalent to a declaration of war against the State by the Government of the Union. But the apprehension felt by the learned Attorney General was caused, I presume, by his anxiety concerning the reception of the message in the South and among the secessionists. It was their misconstruction that he feared. He could not well have supposed that Northern statesmen, grounded at least in the fundamental principles of the Constitution usually accepted at the North, and with the clear distinction put before them in the message between coercing a State and coercing individuals,

would impute to the President an intention to renounce the right to use force in the execution of the laws and the protection of the public property of the Union. In point of fact, as the sequel will show, nearly the whole Republican party, after the message became public, without any rational excuse for such a misconstruction, saw fit to treat the message as a denial by the President of any power to enforce the laws against the citizens of a State after secession, and even after actual rebellion. If this was what the Attorney General anticipated, it would seem that the President, having taken great care to make clear the distinction, was not bound to suppose that a merely partisan spirit of misrepresentation would be applied to such a document as this message, to the extent of utterly perverting its meaning. On the other hand, the disunionists did not misunderstand or misconstrue the message. They saw clearly that it not only denounced secession, but that while it enunciated the doctrine that the Federal Government could not apply force to prevent a State from adopting an ordinance of secession, it could and must use force, if need be, to execute its laws, notwithstanding the secession. This was a doctrine opposed *toto cælo*, and in all its branches, to the secessionist's theory of the Constitution. It met them upon their own ground, for it utterly denied that a State ordinance of secession could absolve its people from obeying the laws of the United States. Accordingly they denounced the message; and upon their theory of the Constitution they denounced it rightly. All friendly intercourse between the leading disunionists in Congress and the President ceased after the message became public; and from the multitude of private letters which reached the President from the South, now lying before me, it is apparent that throughout that section he was regarded, alike by the enemies and the friends of the Union, as having made the issue on which the secessionists desired to have the whole controversy turn. They were just as ready to accept the issue of a constitutional power in the Federal Government to enforce its laws after secession, as they were to accept the issue of coercing a State to remain in the Union.

As soon as the message was published, "thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks in Vallambrosa," private letters of appro-

bation were showered upon the President from all quarters of the North. The most diverse reasons for praising his policy marked this heterogeneous correspondence. The Democrat, who was afraid to have a civil war begin under a Democratic administration, predicted that it would destroy his party forever. The pious "abolitionist," who saw the finger of God in everything, and who prayed daily for a separation of the free and the slave States, so that the reproach of tolerating slavery might no longer rest upon the Constitution of his country, hailed the annunciation of a policy which he thought destined, in the course of Providence, to work out the result which he longed to see. The Quaker, who abhorred war and bloodshed, hoped that "thee" would preserve peace at any price. The man of business, looking to his material interests and to the commercial advantages of the Union, deprecated a civil war which would disturb the natural current of affairs, and would end where no man could foresee. Thoughtful citizens, who comprehended more within their range of reflection than was common with their neighbors, recognized the wisdom and the necessity of the conciliatory steps which the President had recommended. The speculative jurist, meditating in his closet upon what he supposed might be a panacea for this disordered condition of the body politic, sent his recommendations. Nearly all of these classes, in their various ways of looking at such a crisis, were on the whole gratified that the President had afforded to the country a breathing spell, had solemnly called upon Congress to reflect, and had at the same time called upon it to act in the manner best adapted to meet the emergency. Very few desired aggressive measures to be taken, which would put the Federal Government in the attitude of making war upon a State.

These numerous private communications, coming from the people, were addressed to one of the most self-reliant of men, who had surveyed the whole field that was before him, who had firmly settled the general policy which it was his duty to follow, and who was as calm and collected in this great trial as he had ever been in any situation of his life, while he was neither insensible to or careless of its weighty responsibilities. It has been one of the fashionable errors concerning Mr. Buchanan to

impute to him, from age or some other cause, a lack of firmness and self-possession in this perilous emergency. He has been spoken of as having lost his faculties, or as being bewildered by the perplexities of his situation. There never was a more unfounded imputation. It is an imputation to which no one who was closely in contact with him gave at the time any countenance whatever. It will appear, as I go on, that, of the members of his cabinet who were most concerned in all his official acts during the last months of his administration, not one formed at that time the opinion that he was wanting in firmness, decision, or energy, however any of them may have differed with him from time to time in regard to particular steps or measures. The President who sent to Congress the message on which I commented in the last preceding chapter, was certainly equal to the occasion. How he felt, and what he said of his situation, the reader will be interested to learn by the following extract from a confidential letter which he wrote to a gentleman in New York on the 20th of December :

I have never enjoyed better health or a more tranquil spirit than during the past year. All our troubles have not cost me an hour's sleep or a single meal, though I trust I have a just sense of my high responsibility. I weigh well and prayerfully what course I ought to adopt, and adhere to it steadily, leaving the result to Providence. This is my nature, and I deserve neither praise nor blame for it. Every person who served with me in the Senate in high party times would avouch the truth of this statement.

Mr. Buchanan may have made mistakes. If I had discovered them I should not have hesitated to point them out. But that his policy was sound ; that it was the only policy that could have had any chance of preserving the Union without a civil war ; that his motive was eminently patriotic ; that with a serene and superb patience he incurred the risk of obloquy and misrepresentation for the sake of his country ; all this should be the judgment of any impartial mind. Nay, more : I do not hesitate to say that no man can justly accuse him of vacillation, weakness, or timidity. A statesman who has a great task to perform in a national peril, does not always pursue a rigid line of action, without regard to the varying course of events. He

determines, first of all, on the grand object which he wishes to accomplish. If he keeps that object constantly in view, he must necessarily vary his steps as the changing aspects of public affairs require; and one supreme test of his capacity and wisdom as a statesman is to be found in his ability to adapt himself to new situations, and at the same time not to lose sight of the capital object of all his exertions. As a diplomatist, in the highest sense of that term, Mr. Buchanan had few equals in his time, nor have there been many men in our history who were in this respect his superiors. As his course in the inception and progress of the secession movement is developed, it will be seen that the explanation of many of his acts, which have been the most misunderstood or misrepresented, is to be found in the necessity for palliating the danger of an armed collision, at moments when such a collision would have destroyed all hope of a peaceful solution of the sectional difficulties. That at such moments he sacrificed any principle to the management of the immediate question in hand, or imperilled any national interest, or that he ever departed in any essential respect from the great object of his policy, will not be, or ought not to be, the judgment of those who may follow this narrative to the end.

The dis-Unionists of South Carolina, aided by the leading secessionists in Congress from other States of the South, as will be seen hereafter, tried hard to entrap him. They never once succeeded. They meant to draw from him an admission in some form that a State could constitutionally secede from the Union; for they were sorely provoked that he had denied the right of secession in his message, and when South Carolina had actually adopted her ordinance, it became with them a capital point to extort from him a surrender of the forts in Charleston harbor, which would imply that the ordinance had transferred them to the State. They anticipated that if they could once drive him from the position of his message, the Democratic party of the North, looking upon him as its representative, would never encourage or support a war for the recovery of those possessions. They knew that he deprecated and was seeking to avoid a war; and they believed that if he could be

compelled to admit that South Carolina was out of the Union, other States would quickly join her in the same movement. But the truth is, that, with all their astuteness, the secessionists were individually and collectively no match for a man who had in former days contended with the most crafty politicians of Russia, who had encountered and encountered successfully the ablest among the British statesmen of that age, and who knew more of public law and of our constitutional jurisprudence than all the dis-Unionist leaders in the South. In addition to all the resources which Mr. Buchanan had in his own person and his experience as a statesman, he had a very important resource in his Attorney General, and in some of the other gentlemen who joined his cabinet after it became necessary to reconstruct it; and if, in the pressure that was made upon him by the secessionists, and in the hurry of encountering their devices, there was any danger that his determinations might be unskillfully shaped, it was abundantly guarded against by the suggestions of his advisers.

By the public press of the North, the message was of course received according to party affinities. There were many leading articles which regarded it as sound and wise; many which treated it as a kind of "treasonable" giving away of the Union. The general tone, however, of the more moderate journals was hopeful, and the papers of this class based their hopes of a peaceful issue out of all the difficulties upon the President's recommendations. Still, the utterances of the press did not show that even then the public mind of the North fully grasped the extreme gravity of the situation; and if these utterances of the press are to be taken as the best proof of the state of the public mind in the North, without the aid of one's personal recollections and observation, it might be inferred that the message had not produced the impression that it ought. But the great mass of private letters which reached Mr. Buchanan are a better index of what was passing in men's minds; and they show unmistakably that if the Congress had vigorously acted as he advised, the public mind of the North was preparing to sanction and to welcome the course which he recommended,

however diverse were the reasons or the motives which prevailed with the individual writers.\*

The letters which reached the President from the South, after the promulgation of his message, were almost as numerous as those which came from the North, but they did not exhibit such a variety in the motives and feelings that animated the writers. They were from men who represented two principal classes of persons, the Unionists and the dis-Unionists. The latter wrote in a bold, defiant and turbulent spirit. They made it quite clear that they cared nothing for the distinction between coercing a State and coercing individuals, and that they held a State ordinance of secession to be perfectly efficacious to absolve its people from obeying the laws of the United States. They declared that any movement of troops or munitions of war into the Southern States would instantly be accepted as proof of a design to prevent peaceable secession, would promote bloodshed and inaugurate civil war. Many of these persons were terribly in earnest; but if any of them wrote in the expectation that they could operate upon the President's fears, and thus prevent him from carrying out his announced purpose to execute the laws and preserve the public property of the Union, they "reckoned without their host." While he made it apparent to Congress that at that time he was without the necessary executive powers to enforce the collection of the revenue in South Carolina, in case she should secede, he did not fail to call for the appropriate powers and means. And in regard to the application of all the means that he had for protecting the public property, it will be seen hereafter that he omitted no step that could have been taken with safety, and that when the day for the inauguration of his successor arrived, Major Anderson not only held Fort Sumter, but had held it down to that time in perfect confidence that he could maintain his position.

The letters from Union men in the South evinced that there

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\* This mass of private letters is so great, and so fully represents various classes of the community, that I have felt entirely warranted in treating it as the best evidence of the currents of public opinion, as they were setting immediately after the publication of the message. The President could do nothing more with such a correspondence than to have each letter carefully read by a competent private secretary, and its contents duly noted for his information. The whole of it gave him the means of knowing the feelings of the people far better than he could know them by reading the public prints.



was in all the cotton States, excepting in South Carolina, a strong body of men who were not disposed to coöperate in a dismemberment of the Union, and in the destruction of the Government under which they and their fathers had always lived and prospered. They therefore, from their positions, were able to tell Mr. Buchanan how important it was that the Federal Government should not become the aggressor; how vital it was that it should act on the defensive; and how necessary it was that the North, acting through Congress, should adopt the conciliatory measures which he had recommended; measures that would, in regard to the Territories, give the South nothing but a barren abstraction, and that would, in regard to the extradition of fugitives, give the South only what it had a perfect right to demand. Although all this was entirely apparent to the President without the information which these letters gave him, these expressions of the feelings, opinions and hopes of the Unionists of that region were a strong confirmation of the wisdom of his policy.

The tone of the Southern press respecting the message was in general violent and inflammatory, but with many noteworthy exceptions. But as in the North, so in the South, the private letters to the President were a better index of the currents of feeling and opinion than anything that could be found in the utterances of the press.

In Congress, when the message was received, there was a singular state of parties. First, there were the Republicans, flushed with their recent political triumph in the election of Mr. Lincoln, and entirely indisposed to make any concessions that would militate, or seem to militate, against the dogmas of the "Chicago Platform." This party was purely sectional in its composition, tendencies and purposes. Next were the representatives of the Southern States, most of whom held theoretically to the State right of secession. This party was a sectional one, also; but, as will hereafter be shown, there were a few Southern men in Congress who did not believe in the doctrine of secession, who favored no extreme demands of the South, and who acted throughout with a steady purpose to preserve the peace of the country and the integrity of the Union. Thirdly, there were the Northern Democrats, represented by such Sena-

tors as Mr. Douglas, Mr. Bigler and Mr. Bright, who could act as mediators between the extreme sectional parties of North and South. It was to such a Congress that the President addressed his message, at a moment when South Carolina was about to secede from the Union, and when the danger was that all the other cotton States would follow her example. He was convinced that an attempt of those seven States to form a confederacy, independent of the United States, could not be overcome without a long and bloody war, into which the other Southern States, commonly called from their geographical situation the border States, would sooner or later be drawn. A great army would be needed to encounter even the cotton States, and no free institutions in the world had ever survived the dangers to which such an army had exposed them. To prosecute a civil war would entail upon the Federal Government a debt which could not be calculated; and although the taxation necessary to uphold that debt might be thrown upon posterity, in part, yet the commercial, manufacturing, agricultural, mechanical and laboring classes must be at once exposed to ruinous burthens. To avert such calamities, by the employment of all the constitutional powers of his office, was his supreme desire.\* It was the great misfortune of his position, that he had to appeal to a Congress, in which there were two sectional parties breathing mutual defiance; in which a broad and patriotic statesmanship was confined to a small body of men who could not win over to their views a sufficient number from either of the sectional parties to make up a majority upon any proposition whatever.

The message was unsatisfactory to both of the sectional parties. Mr. Jefferson Davis, in the Senate the ablest and most conspicuous of the secessionist leaders, now committed the grand error of his career as a statesman in this national crisis. He denounced the message because of its earnest argument against secession, and because the President had expressed in it his purpose to collect the revenue in the port of Charleston, by means of a naval force, and to defend the public property. Mr. Davis did not need to make this issue with the President, or to make

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\* Buchanan's Defence, pp. 112-113.

any issue with him, unless he was determined to encourage South Carolina to leave the Union, and to encourage the other cotton States to follow her. His own State had not then seceded, and whether she would do so depended very much upon his course. However strongly and sincerely he may have believed in the right of secession, the President had afforded to him and to every other Southern statesman an opportunity to forestall any necessity for a practical assertion of that right, by giving his voice and his vote for measures of conciliation that ought to have been satisfactory to every Southern constituency and every Southern representative. It was a capital mistake, for Mr. Davis and the other secessionist leaders, to separate themselves from the President, and afterwards to endeavor to extort from him an admission that South Carolina had gone out of the Union, and that the laws of the United States could not be executed within her limits, or the possession of the forts in her harbor be maintained. Mr. Calhoun would not have thus acted. He would have exerted his whole power to procure concessions fit to be offered by the North, and to be received by the South, before he would have encouraged his State to secede from the Union in advance of the decision that no such concessions would be made.

The spirit of the Republican Senators towards the message may be seen from the very unjust representation of its tenor made by Mr. Hale of New Hampshire, who said that in substance its positions were: 1. That South Carolina has just cause to secede from the Union. 2. That she has no right to secede. 3. That we have no right to prevent her. So far from saying or intimating that South Carolina had just cause to secede from the Union, the President had in the message carefully and explicitly drawn that distinction between the right of revolutionary resistance to intolerable oppression, and the supposed right of State secession from the Union on account of anticipated danger; a distinction which Madison, Jefferson, Jackson and Webster always made when dealing with the subject. That distinction was not more clearly and emphatically made by Mr. Webster in his encounters with Mr. Hayne and Mr. Calhoun, than it was made by Mr. Buchanan in this message. And if Mr. Hale had been disposed to do justice to the message, instead of

employing a witticism that might be remembered by persons who would not take the pains to understand such a public document on a subject of such fearful gravity, he would have admitted what all men should then have admitted, and what afterwards became the only justifiable basis of the civil war: that to coerce a State to remain in the Union is not, but that to enforce the execution of the laws upon the individual inhabitants of the States is, a power that the Government of the United States can constitutionally exercise. There was one member of that Senate, who was no disunionist, who understood the President rightly, and who knew well what the Constitution would or would not authorize. This was Andrew Johnson, of Tennessee, afterwards President of the United States.

"I do not believe," said Mr. Johnson, "the Federal Government has the power to coerce a State, for by the eleventh amendment of the Constitution of the United States it is expressly provided that you cannot even put one of the States of this Confederacy before one of the courts of the country as a party. As a State, the Federal Government has no power to coerce it; but it is a member of the compact to which it agreed in common with the other States, and this Government has the right to pass laws, and to enforce those laws upon individuals within the limits of each State. While the one proposition is clear, the other is equally so. This Government can, by the Constitution of the country, and by the laws enacted in conformity with the Constitution, operate upon individuals, and has the right and the power, not to coerce a State, but to enforce and execute the law upon individuals within the limits of a State." \*

It was well for the country that at this early period Mr. Buchanan had the wisdom to foresee and the firmness to enunciate the only doctrine that could save the Government of the United States from the consequences of making war upon a State, and at the same time enable it to suppress all insurrectionary resistance to its constitutional authority. It might suit the secessionists to claim that their States would become, by their ordinances of secession, independent nations, capable as such of waging war against the United States, or of having it

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\* Speech in the Senate, December 18, 1860. *Congressional Globe*, p. 119.

waged upon them by the United States, if such was the pleasure of the latter. It might suit them to put the alternative of such a war against the consent of the United States to their peaceful renunciation of their connection with the Federal Government. It might suit them to confound all the distinctions between revolutionary resistance to a government because some actual oppression has been suffered from it, and the secession of States from the American Union because future oppression is to be feared. It might suit them to say that to coerce the individual inhabitants of a State to obey the laws of the United States, after the State has absolved them from that obligation by its sovereign will, is the same thing as to coerce a State to remain in the Union. But this was not a dispute about words; it was a controversy about the substantive powers of a constitutional Government; a great question of things, and of things drawing after them the most important consequences. If there was to be a war, it was a matter of supreme importance what that war was to be, in its inception. Mr. Buchanan did not mean that its character, if it must come, should be obscured. He did not mean that it should be a war waged aggressively by the United States to prevent a State from adopting an ordinance of what she might call secession. He did not mean to concede the possibility that the Federal Government could begin or carry on a war against a State, as a power which could by its own act erect itself into a nation to be conquered and subdued and destroyed, as one nation may conquer, subdue and destroy another. Knowing that such a recognition of the potency of an ordinance of secession would be fatal to the future of the whole Union, and knowing from long study of the Constitution how the laws of the United States may be enforced upon individuals notwithstanding that their State has claimed a paramount sovereignty over them, or a paramount dispensing power, he left upon the records of the country the clear line of demarcation which would have to be observed by his successor, and which would make the use of force, if force must be used, a war, not of aggression, but of defence; a war not for the conquest and obliteration of a State, but a war for the assertion of the authority of the Constitution over the individuals subject to its sway. It was only by treating secession as a nullity, and by

acting upon the principle that the people of a State would be equally bound to obey the laws of the United States after secession as they had been before, that the President could furnish to Congress any principle on which force could be used. It is not remarkable that the secession leaders should have rejected his doctrine. But it is strange, passing strange, that Northern men should have misrepresented it. Yet there was not a single public man in the whole North, in all the discussion that followed this message, on the Republican side, who saw, or who, if he saw, had the candor to say, that the President had furnished to Congress a principle of action that would alone prevent secession from working the consequences which its advocates claimed for it, or that could prevent the conquest and subjugation of States as foreign nations. And now, when we look back upon the war that ensued, and when we measure the disparity of force that enabled the United States eventually to prevail over the exhausted Southern Confederacy, there are no people in the whole Union who have more cause than the secessionists themselves, to be grateful to President Buchanan for not having admitted the possibility of legitimate war upon the States that seceded; while for the people of the whole Union there remains a debt of gratitude to him, for having laid down the principle that saved them from crushing the political autonomy of those States, in a war that could have had no result but to reduce them to the condition of subjugated provinces.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

1860—December.

GENERAL SCOTT AGAIN ADVISES THE PRESIDENT—MAJOR ANDERSON'S REMOVAL FROM FORT MOULTRIE TO FORT SUMTER—ARRIVAL OF COMMISSIONERS FROM SOUTH CAROLINA IN WASHINGTON—THEIR INTERVIEW AND COMMUNICATION WITH THE PRESIDENT—THE SUPPOSED PLEDGE OF THE STATUS QUO—THE "CABINET CRISIS" OF DECEMBER 29TH—REPLY OF THE PRESIDENT TO THE SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSIONERS—THE ANONYMOUS DIARIST OF THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW CONFUTED.

ON the 12th of December General Scott arrived in Washington from New York, where he had been ill for a long time. Since the presentation of his "views" of October 29th—30th, the President had not heard from him on the subject of the Southern forts. On the 11th of December Major Anderson, then at Fort Moultrie, and in no danger of attack or molestation by the authorities of South Carolina, had received his instructions from Major Buell, Assistant Adjutant General of the Army, who had been sent by the President expressly to Fort Moultrie, in order that Anderson might be guided in his course with reference to all probable contingencies.\* The South Carolina convention had not assembled when Anderson received his instructions. General Scott, on the 15th of December, had an interview with the President, in which he urged that three hundred men be sent to reinforce Anderson at Fort Moultrie. The President declined to give this order, for the following reasons: First, Anderson was fully instructed what to do in case he should at any time see good reason to believe that there was any purpose to dispossess him of any of the forts. Secondly, at this time, December 15th, the President believed—and the

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\* The instructions will be quoted hereafter.

event proved the correctness of his belief—that Anderson was in no danger of attack. He and his command were then treated with marked kindness by the authorities and people of Charleston. Thirdly, the President, in his annual message, had urged upon Congress measures of conciliation by the adoption of certain amendments of the Constitution; and Mr. Crittenden's propositions, of substantially the same character as those of the President, called the "Crittenden Compromise," were before the Senate. Strong hopes were at this time entertained throughout the country that Congress would adopt these or some other measures to quiet the agitation in the South, so that South Carolina, in case she should "secede," would be left alone in her course. Under all these circumstances, to have sent additional troops to Fort Moultrie would only have been, as Mr. Buchanan afterward said, "to impair the hope of compromise, to provoke collision and disappoint the country."\*

On the same day, General Scott sent a note to the President, reminding him of General Jackson's measures in regard to the threatened nullification of the tariff in 1833; an occasion, the circumstances of which bore little resemblance to the situation of the country in December, 1860, as I have already had reason to say in commenting on General Scott's "views" of October 29th-30th.

In the controversy which General Scott had with Mr. Buchanan in 1862, in the *National Intelligencer*, the General reported the President as saying to him, on the 15th of December, 1860, among other reasons for not reinforcing Anderson at that time, that he should await the action of the South Carolina convention, in the expectation that a commission would be appointed and sent to negotiate with *him* (the President) and Congress, respecting the secession of the State, and the property of the United States within the borders of that State; and that if Congress should decide against the secession, he would then send a reinforcement, and would telegraph to Anderson to hold the forts against any attack. General Scott made two palpable mistakes in thus representing what the

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\* See the controversy between General Scott and Mr. Buchanan in 1862; Mr. Buchanan's letter of October 28, 1862.



President said to him on the 15th of December, 1860.\* In the first place, as will presently appear, the President never gave any person or persons claiming to represent South Carolina to understand that he would receive a commission to negotiate with *him* for an admission of the right of secession, or for a surrender of the forts. In his annual message, he had most distinctly and emphatically declared that, as an executive officer, he had no power whatever to hold such a negotiation, but that it belonged to Congress to deal with the property of the United States as it should see fit; and that it was his duty to maintain the possession of the forts until Congress should authorize and direct him to surrender them. When commissioners were subsequently appointed by the State of South Carolina, they were told by the President that he could not receive them in a diplomatic character, and that he would not himself negotiate with them for a surrender of the forts. In the next place, the President could not have told General Scott that he would send a reinforcement to Anderson in a certain contingency, and would then telegraph him to hold the forts. Anderson had already received instructions to hold them, and had been directed how to act.

Mr. Buchanan has said—and it deserves to be quoted—that “it is scarcely a lack of charity to infer that General Scott knew at the time he made this recommendation (on the 15th of December), that it must be rejected. The President could not have complied with it, the position of affairs remaining unchanged, without at once reversing his entire policy, and without a degree of inconsistency amounting almost to self-stultification.” He adds:

This, the General's second recommendation, was wholly unexpected. He had remained silent for more than six weeks from the date of his supplemental “views,” convinced, as the President inferred, that he had abandoned the idea of garrisoning all these forts with “the five companies only” within his reach. Had the President never so earnestly desired to reinforce the nine forts in question, at this time, it would have been little short of madness to undertake the task with the small force at his command. Without authority

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\* Mr. Buchanan said, in 1862, that he had no recollection of some of the details of the conversation imputed to him by General Scott, and that the General's memory must be defective. See Mr. Buchanan's letters of 1862, in the *National Intelligencer*.

to call forth the militia, or accept the services of volunteers for the purpose, this whole force now consisted of six hundred recruits, obtained by the General since the date of his "views," in addition to the five regular companies. Our army was still out of reach on the remote frontiers, and could not be withdrawn during midwinter in time for this military operation. Indeed, the General had never suggested such a withdrawal. He knew that had this been possible, the inhabitants on our distant frontiers would have been immediately exposed to the tomahawk and scalping knife of the Indians.

While he was unwilling at this moment to send reinforcements into the harbor of Charleston, and thereby to incur the risk of provoking the secession of other States, the President did not neglect the use of any means that were in his power to prevent the secession of South Carolina. He sent the Hon. Caleb Cushing to Charleston, with a letter to Governor Pickens, in which he said :

From common notoriety I assume the fact that the State of South Carolina is now deliberating on the propriety and necessity of seceding from the Union. Whilst any hope remains that this may be prevented, or even retarded, so long as to enable the people of her sister States to have opportunity to manifest their opinion regarding the matters which may have impelled the State to take this step, it is my duty to exert all the means in my power to avoid so dread a catastrophe. I have, therefore, deemed it advisable to send to you the Hon. Caleb Cushing, to counsel and advise with you, in regard to the premises, and to communicate such information as he may possess concerning the condition of public opinion in the North touching the same. I need scarcely add, that I entertain full confidence in his integrity, ability, and prudence. He will state to you the reasons which exist to prevent, or to delay, the action of the State for the purpose which I have mentioned.

But notwithstanding the efforts of the President to induce the authorities and people of South Carolina to await the action of Congress and the development of public opinion at the North on the recommendations of his message, events were hurrying on in that State with fearful rapidity. The leading spirits in the secession movement did not desire the success of the President's recommendations. Encouraged, not by anything that they could find in the message, or by anything that they could learn of the President's intentions, but by what they had learned of the "views" of the General in Chief of the Federal army, and by other indications of the same kind, they determined to try

secession, in the belief that the people and Government of the United States would not resort to war. They initiated and conducted their measures with a supreme and lofty disregard of all the consequences, because they believed that they could throw the onus of those consequences upon the Government of the Union. It was in vain that they were warned by the President that their doctrine of secession, pushed to its results, would oblige him to meet their claim, by virtue of a State ordinance, of dispossessing the United States of the property which belonged to the Government, with all the means at his disposal. It is one of the most singular political phenomena recorded in history, that under such a system of Government as ours, men should have believed not only that a State ordinance of secession would dissolve all the relations between the inhabitants of that State and the Government of the United States, but that it would *ipso facto* transfer to the State property which the State had ceded to that Government by solemn deeds of conveyance. The principle of public law on which this claim was supposed to be based, involved in its application the assumption that South Carolina, becoming by her own declaration a nation foreign to the United States, was entitled to take peaceable possession of all the property which the United States held within her limits, and to forbid the vessels of the United States from entering her waters in order to reach that property. Upon any view of the nature of the Federal Constitution, even upon the theory that it was a mere league between sovereign States, dissoluble in regard to any State at the will of its people, it would not have followed that the ordinance of dissolution would divest the title of the United States to their property. Yet it is an undeniable fact that the people and authorities of South Carolina initiated and carried out their secession, upon the claim that their interpretation of the Federal Constitution must be accepted by the whole country; that their fiat alone made them an independent nation; that it divested the United States of whatever property the Government held within their borders; and that if these claims were not submitted to, the consequence would be that South Carolina must make them good by all the power she could use. The subsequent change of attitude, by which it was proposed to negotiate and pay for the possession

of the property, or the theory that the forts were built by the Federal Government for the protection of the State, should not lead any historian to overlook the demand which the authorities of the State first presented at Washington, or the manner in which it was met by President Buchanan.

On the 20th of December, the Convention of South Carolina, without a dissenting voice, adopted an ordinance of secession, which purported to dissolve the connection between the State of South Carolina and the Government of the United States. A copy of the ordinance, with the signatures of all the members, and with the great seal of the State, was formally transmitted to the President. On the 22d, three eminent citizens of the State, Robert W. Barnwell, James H. Adams and James L. Orr, were appointed to proceed to Washington, to treat with the Government of the United States concerning the new relations which the ordinance was supposed to have established between that Government and the people of South Carolina. The commissioners arrived in Washington on the 26th. On the next morning, intelligence reached them that on the night of the 25th, Major Anderson had secretly dismantled Fort Moultrie, spiked his cannon, burnt his gun-carriages, and transferred his troops to Fort Sumter, as if he were about to be attacked. This information they sent to the President.

Before proceeding with an account of what followed this occurrence, in the interview between the President and the commissioners, this movement of Major Anderson must be carefully described. It has been much praised as a bold, skillful and wise act, dictated by a purpose to make the people of South Carolina feel that the Government of the United States was not to be trifled with; and the merit of Major Anderson has been magnified by the suggestion that if he had been promptly reinforced, after the removal, he never would have been driven out of Fort Sumter and out of the harbor of Charleston. The simple truth is, that Anderson was a brave, vigilant and faithful officer, acting under instructions which had been carefully given to him, and which allowed him a considerable latitude of judgment in regard to remaining in Fort Moultrie or removing to any other of the forts within the limits of his command. He was a man of Southern birth, and all his

sympathies were with the South on the questions pending between the two sections. This is avowed in a private letter written by him on the 11th of January, 1861, to a friend in Washington, a copy of which is now lying before me. But he was as true as steel to his military duty as an officer of the United States. He had lost, as he says in this letter, all sympathy with the persons then governing South Carolina, and he had now begun to distrust the purposes of the State authorities. Fort Moultrie was the weakest of all the forts in that harbor belonging to the United States. From the erection of batteries on the shore which commanded this fort, and from other indications taking place after the adoption of the secession ordinance, Anderson believed that the State authorities were about to proceed to some hostile act, and therefore thought the contingency contemplated by his instructions had arrived. He may have been mistaken in this; but neither the appearances at the time, nor the subsequent action of South Carolina, show that he was so. At all events, he acted as any prudent and faithful officer would have acted under the same circumstances; and in order to be able to defend himself better than he could in Fort Moultrie, and with no purpose of attacking the city of Charleston or of making any aggression whatever, he transferred his command to Fort Sumter. The people and authorities of South Carolina chose to consider that his occupation of this fort was an aggressive act, and that he must be ordered back again to Fort Moultrie, or be dislodged; a demand which of itself shows that the State of South Carolina, in the event that her secession should not be submitted to by the Federal Government, expected a civil war and meant to be in the best condition to meet it.

The intelligence of Anderson's removal to Fort Sumter was received by the President with surprise and regret. He was surprised, because all his previous information led him to believe that Anderson was safe at Fort Moultrie. He regretted the removal, because of its tendency to impel the other cotton States and the border States into sympathy with South Carolina, and thus to defeat the measures by which he hoped to confine the secession to that State. But he never for an instant, then or afterwards, doubted that Anderson's removal

was authorized by his instructions; although he did not suppose that the authorities of the State would attack him, while their commissioners were on the way to Washington for the avowed purpose of negotiating. It is scarcely needful to discuss the question whether South Carolina had good reason to regard this movement of Anderson's as an act of aggression. In such a state of affairs and of men's feelings, it was to be expected that complaints would be made of hostile intentions, if any plausible reason could be found for them. But any indifferent person, looking back upon the events, and considering that Anderson was acting under a President who was doing everything in his power to prevent a collision of arms, must see that even if the President had specifically ordered the removal, it was nothing more than a defensive act, done in order to secure the forces of the Government in the occupation of its own forts, and that it could not have been an aggressive movement, unless it should be conceded that those forces had no right to be in Charleston harbor at all.

But there is one assertion which it is now necessary to examine, in relation to this removal, because it has been made the foundation of a charge against the personal good faith and the sound judgment of President Buchanan. It is the charge that previous to Anderson's removal, the President had pledged himself to preserve the *status quo* in Charleston harbor, until commissioners to be appointed by the convention of South Carolina should arrive in Washington, and some result of a negotiation should be reached. The first and only interview between the President and the commissioners occurred on the 28th of December. What occurred should be related in the President's own words:

It was under these circumstances that the President, on Friday, the 28th December, held his first and only interview with the commissioners from South Carolina. He determined to listen with patience to what they had to communicate, taking as little part himself in the conversation as civility would permit. On their introduction, he stated that he could recognize them only as private gentlemen and not as commissioners from a sovereign State; that it was to Congress, and to Congress alone, they must appeal. He, nevertheless, expressed his willingness to communicate to that body, as the only competent tribunal, any propositions they might have to offer. They then proceeded,

evidently under much excitement, to state their grievances arising out of the removal of Major Anderson to Fort Sumter, and declared that for these they must obtain redress preliminary to entering upon the negotiation with which they had been entrusted; that it was impossible for them to make any proposition until this removal should be satisfactorily explained; and they even insisted upon the immediate withdrawal of the Major and his troops, not only from Fort Sumter, but from the harbor of Charleston, as a *sine qua non* to any negotiation.

In their letter to the President of the next day, they repeat their demand, saying: \* "And, in conclusion, we would urge upon you the immediate withdrawal of the troops from the harbor of Charleston. Under present circumstances they are a standing menace which renders negotiation impossible, and, as our recent experience shows, threatens to bring to a bloody issue questions which ought to be settled with temperance and judgment." This demand, accompanied by an unmistakable threat of attacking Major Anderson if not yielded to, was of the most extravagant character. To comply with it, the commissioners must have known, would be impossible. Had they simply requested that Major Anderson might be restored to his former position at Fort Moultrie, upon a guarantee from the State that neither it nor the other forts or public property should be molested; this, at the moment, might have been worthy of serious consideration. But to abandon all the forts to South Carolina, on the demand of commissioners claiming to represent her as an independent State, would have been a recognition, on the part of the Executive, of her right to secede from the Union. This was not to be thought of for a moment.

The President replied to the letter of the commissioners on Monday, 31st December. In the meantime information had reached him that the State authorities, without waiting to hear from Washington, had, on the day after Major Anderson's removal, seized Fort Moultrie, Castle Pinckney, the custom house, and post office, and over them all had raised the Palmetto flag; and, moreover, that every officer of the customs, collector, naval officer, surveyor, appraisers, together with the postmaster, had resigned their appointments; and that on Sunday, the 30th December, they had captured from Major Humphreys, the officer in charge, the arsenal of the United States, containing public property estimated to be worth half a million of dollars. The Government was thus expelled from all its property except Fort Sumter, and no Federal officers, whether civil or military, remained in the city or harbor of Charleston. The secession leaders in Congress attempted to justify these violent proceedings of South Carolina as acts of self-defence, on the assumption that Major Anderson had already commenced hostilities. It is certain that their tone instantly changed after his removal; and they urged its secrecy, the hour of the night when it was made, the destruction of his gun-carriages, and other attendant incidents, to inflame the passions of their followers. It was under

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\* Ex. Doc., II. R., vol. vi, No. 26, p. 6.

these circumstances that the President was called upon to reply to the letter of the South Carolina commissioners, demanding the immediate withdrawal of the troops of the United States from the harbor of Charleston. In this reply, he peremptorily rejected the demand in firm but courteous terms, and declared his purpose to defend Fort Sumter by all the means in his power against hostile attacks, from whatever quarter they might proceed. (*Vide* his letter of the 31st December, 1860, Ex. Doc. No. 26, H. R., 36th Congress, 2d Session, accompanying President's message of 8th January, 1861.) To this the commissioners sent their answer, dated on the 2d January, 1861. This was so violent, unfounded, and disrespectful, and so regardless of what is due to any individual whom the people have honored with the office of President, that the reading of it in the cabinet excited indignation among all the members. With their unanimous approbation it was immediately, on the day of its date, returned to the commissioners with the following indorsement: "This paper, just presented to the President, is of such a character, that he declines to receive it." Surely no negotiation was ever conducted in such a manner, unless, indeed, it had been the predetermined purpose of the negotiators to produce an open and immediate rupture.

In the intended reply of the commissioners, dated January 2, 1861, which the President returned to them, it was asserted in a variety of offensive forms that the removal of Major Anderson to Fort Sumter was a violation of a pledge which the President had previously given not to send reinforcements to the forts in Charleston harbor, and not to change their relative military status. The same thing had been asserted in their letter to the President of December 28th, and it was emphatically and distinctly denied in his answer of the 31st. Is it true, then, as a matter of fact, that such a pledge had ever been given?

1. By his annual message of December 3d, the President stood pledged to the country to exercise all his constitutional powers to maintain possession of the public property, in case of the secession of any State or States. 2. There is no possible channel through which the President could have given the supposed pledge of the *status quo*, excepting at an interview which took place between him and the South Carolina members of Congress on the 10th of December. If the President then gave such a pledge, it follows that at the end of a week from the date of his annual message he tied his own hands, in advance of the secession of that State, in a manner utterly inconsistent with the purpose declared in his message. 3. The circumstances attending Major



Anderson's removal from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter, and the manner in which the President received and acted upon the information after it reached him and down through every succeeding day of his administration, repel the idea that before the removal he had said or done anything to warrant the authorities of South Carolina in assuming that he was bound to order Anderson back to Fort Moultrie, or not to reinforce him at Fort Sumter. Anderson received his instructions on the 11th of December, through Assistant Adjutant General Buell, to whom they were given verbally by the Secretary of War, and by whom they were reduced to writing, at Fort Moultrie, after he (Buell) arrived there. When reduced to writing, they became the President's orders, by which Anderson was to be guided. The orders were given with reference to the following contingency: The President believed that, under existing circumstances, the State of South Carolina would not attack any of the forts in Charleston harbor, whilst he allowed their *status quo* to remain. But in this he might be mistaken. In order to be prepared for what might possibly happen after the State should have "seceded," the Secretary of the Navy had stationed the war steamer Brooklyn, in complete readiness for sea, in Hampton Roads, to take on board for Charleston three hundred disciplined troops, with provisions and munitions of war, from the neighboring garrison of Fortress Monroe. In this attitude of the secret preparations of the Government, Anderson's instructions were given to him, in the manner above described, and when they had been reduced to writing and delivered to him by Buell, they read textually as follows:

You are aware of the great anxiety of the Secretary of War, that a collision of the troops with the people of the State shall be avoided, and of his studied determination to pursue a course with reference to the military force and forts in this harbor, which shall guard against such a collision. He has, therefore, carefully abstained from increasing the force at this point, or taking any measures which might add to the present excited state of the public mind, or which would throw any doubt on the confidence he feels that South Carolina will not attempt by violence to obtain possession of the public works, or interfere with their occupancy. But as the counsel and acts of rash and impulsive persons may possibly disappoint these expectations of the Government, he deems it proper that you shall be prepared with instructions to meet so unhappy a contingency. He has, therefore, directed me verbally to give you

such instructions. You are carefully to avoid every act which would needlessly tend to provoke aggression, and for that reason you are not, without evident and imminent necessity, to take up any position which could be construed into the assumption of a hostile attitude, but you are to hold possession of the forts in this harbor, and if attacked you are to defend yourself to the last extremity. The smallness of your force will not permit you, perhaps, to occupy more than one of the three forts, but an attack on or an attempt to take possession of either one of them will be regarded as an act of hostility, and you may then put your command into either of them which you may deem most proper to increase its power of resistance. You are also authorized to take similar defensive steps whenever you have tangible evidence of a design to proceed to a hostile act.

The President, when the text of the instructions reached him, directed the Secretary of War to modify them in one particular. Instead of requiring Anderson to defend himself to the last extremity—which was not demanded by any principle of honor or any military rule—he was required to defend himself until no reasonable hope should remain of saving the fort in which he might happen to be. This modification was approved by General Scott.

The instructions, therefore, under which Anderson acted, authorized him to remove his force to any other of the three forts whenever either of them should be attacked, or an attempt should be made to take possession of it, or whenever he might have tangible evidence of a design to proceed to a hostile act. In all this, the Government was acting on the defensive, and was empowering its officer to put his force into either of its forts where, in his judgment, his power of resistance would be most increased. To suppose, therefore, that after these instructions had gone to Anderson, the President made an agreement with certain members of Congress from South Carolina, that the *status quo* in Charleston harbor, in respect to the three forts, should not be changed, is to suppose something in the highest degree incredible.

4th. The communication between the President and the South Carolina members of Congress was both in writing and in two personal interviews. The written communication remains. Of what took place at the last interview there is an account by Mr. Buchanan himself, founded on memoranda which he made immediately after these gentlemen had left his

presence. The first personal interview took place on the 8th of December. The conversation related to the best means of avoiding a hostile collision between the Federal Government and the State of South Carolina. The President desired that the verbal communication should be put in writing, and brought to him in that form. Accordingly on the 10th of December, the same gentlemen brought to him the following letter, signed by five members of Congress from South Carolina, and dated on the previous day :

TO HIS EXCELLENCY JAMES BUCHANAN,  
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES :

In compliance with our statement to you yesterday, we now express to you our strong convictions that neither the constituted authorities nor any body of the people of the State of South Carolina will either attack or molest the United States forts in the harbor of Charleston previously to the action of the convention, and we hope and believe, not until an offer has been made through an accredited representative to negotiate for an amicable arrangement of all matters between the State and the Federal Government, provided that no reinforcements shall be sent into those forts, and their relative military status remain as at present.

JOHN MCQUEEN,  
WM. PORCHER MILES.  
M. L. BONHAM,  
W. W. BOYCE,  
LAWRENCE M. KEITT.

WASHINGTON, December 9, 1860.

The following memorandum is indorsed upon the original letter, in the handwriting of the President :

Monday morning, 10th December, 1860, the within paper was presented to me by Messrs. McQueen, Miles and Bonham. I objected to the word "provided," as this might be construed into an agreement on my part which I never would make. They said nothing was further from their intention. They did not so understand it, and I should not so consider it. Afterwards, Messrs. McQueen and Bonham called, in behalf of the delegation, and gave me the most positive assurance that the forts and public property would not be molested until after commissioners had been appointed to treat with the Federal Government in relation to the public property, and until the decision was known. I informed them that what would be done was a question for Congress and not for the Executive. That if they [the forts] were assailed, this would put them completely in the wrong, and making them the authors of the civil war. They gave the same assurances to Messrs. Floyd, Thompson and others.

Mr. Buchanan's subsequent account of the interview at which this letter was delivered to him in person, reads as follows :

Both in this and in their previous conversation, they declared that in making this statement, they were acting solely on their own responsibility, and expressly disclaimed any authority to bind their State. They, nevertheless, expressed the confident belief that they would be sustained both by the State authorities and by the convention, after it should assemble. Although the President considered this declaration as nothing more than the act of five highly respectable members of the House from South Carolina, yet he welcomed it as a happy omen, that by means of their influence collision might be prevented, and time afforded to all parties for reflection and for a peaceable adjustment. From abundant caution, however, he objected to the word "provided" in their statement, lest, if he should accept it without remark, this might possibly be construed into an agreement on his part not to reinforce the forts. Such an agreement, he informed them, he would never make. It would be impossible for him, from the nature of his official responsibility, thus to tie his own hands and restrain his own freedom of action. Still, they might have observed from his message, that he had no present design, under existing circumstances, to change the condition of the forts at Charleston. He must, notwithstanding, be left entirely free to exercise his own discretion, according to exigencies as they might arise. They replied that nothing was further from their intention than such a construction of this word ; they did not so understand it, and he should not so consider it.\*

No one, therefore, I presume, will now question that I am fully justified in asserting, as I do, that Mr. Buchanan gave no pledge, express or implied, formal or informal, that no reinforcements should be sent into Charleston harbor, or that the military status, as it existed at the time of this interview, should remain unchanged, or that he in any way fettered himself on the subject.† To have done so in advance of the action of the South

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\* This account, although written and published in 1865 (Buchanan's Defence, p. 167), was founded on and embodied the substance of the private memorandum made by the President on the back of the letter, immediately after the termination of the interview. Two of the gentlemen who signed the letter, Messrs. Miles and Keitt, published at Charleston an account of this interview, in which they did not intimate that anything in the nature of a pledge passed on either side. (See Appleton's "American Annual Cyclopaedia" for 1861, p. 703.)

† Mr. Jefferson Davis, although not directly asserting that the President gave any pledge not to send reinforcements or not to permit the military *status* to be changed, says that "the South Carolinians understood Mr. Buchanan as approving of that suggestion, although declining to make any formal pledge;" and he adds, that after Anderson's removal from Moultrie to Sumter, the authorities and people of South Carolina considered it "as a violation of the implied pledge of a maintenance of the *status quo*," and he gives this as a reason why the remaining forts and other public property were at once seized by the State. (Davis, Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government, I., 213-213.) If the South Carolina members

Carolina convention, or at any other time, would have been an act of inconsistency and folly quite beyond anything that the worst enemy of the President could have ever desired to impute to him.

But the South Carolina commissioners having asserted in their letter of December 28th, that the removal of Major Anderson from Moultrie to Sumter was a violation of a pledge that had been given by the President, it became important that the denial should instantly follow the assertion. The President, relying not only on his recollection, but on his written memoranda of his conversation with the South Carolina members of Congress, which completely refuted the assertion, did not, in the first draft of an answer to the commissioners, which he prepared with his own hand, repel the assertion as flatly and explicitly as he might have done. He evidently did not at once see that unless he expressly and pointedly denied the assertion, he might be construed as giving an implied assent to it. He was considering how he could best carry on this conference with persons whom he could not receive in the official character in which they came, and with whom he could only deal as distinguished citizens of South Carolina; and his first attention was directed to the means of convincing *them* that the people of South Carolina could have no excuse for breaking the peace, because it was not his purpose to reinforce Major Anderson unless the authorities of the State should make it absolutely necessary to do so. But to three members of his cabinet, Judge Black, Mr. Holt, and Mr. Stanton, the omission of the President to give a pointed and explicit denial to the assertion of a pledge not to change the military status, appeared a fatal defect in the paper which the President had drawn up. They were also apprehensive that the first and the concluding paragraph of his proposed answer would be regarded as acknowledging the right of South Carolina to be represented near the Government of the United States by diplomatic officers, as if she were a foreign nation. As the draft of an

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of Congress told Mr. Davis that the President assented to or approved of their *proviso*, they told him what was not true. He does not say that they ever did tell him so. If they gave their own people and State authorities to understand that there was any implied pledge of a maintenance of the *status quo*, the fact was exactly the other way. They have never said that they gave their people and authorities so to understand Mr. Buchanan's language.

answer which the President had prepared is not in existence, and as the paper of objections presented by Judge Black to the President did not quote the paragraphs objected to, although that paper has been preserved, it is impossible to judge how far the criticism was right, or was called for. Certain it is that at the first and only interview which the President had with those commissioners, he told them in the plainest terms that he could only recognize them as private gentlemen, and not as commissioners of an independent State. He also told them that as to any surrender to South Carolina of the forts, within her limits, or any propositions concerning a sale of them, he, as President, had no authority, and that the only tribunal to which they could apply was Congress. I am inclined to believe that it was the repetition of this suggestion of an appeal to Congress, which caused the three members of the cabinet to fear that the paragraphs to which they objected might be considered as implicitly yielding to the commissioners the point of their diplomatic character. But it is not necessary to speculate about this, because the President's draft of an answer is no longer accessible, and because it is evident from all that occurred that the President, in drawing up that form of his answer, meant to hold open a door to the commissioners which it would be perfectly proper for him to allow them to enter, if they chose. He meant to give them an opportunity to stipulate that if Major Anderson were restored to his former position, their State would not molest either Fort Moultrie or any of the other forts or property of the United States. Instead of this, their demand from first to last was the withdrawal of all the troops of the United States from the harbor of Charleston, and an abandonment of all the forts to South Carolina; which, if acceded to by the Executive, would have been a recognition by him of her right to secede from the Union. "This," says Mr. Buchanan, "was not to be thought of for a moment;" and I know of no evidence that he thought of it or contemplated it, when he was writing his first draft of an answer to the South Carolina gentlemen. On the contrary, he steadily resisted it to the end of the conference, and ever afterward.

Another point on which the three members of the cabinet differed from the President was in regard to having any nego-

tiation at all with these gentlemen. It would seem from the paper of objections presented to the President by Judge Black, that the President was at first disposed, in the answer which he had prepared, to express his regret that the commissioners were unwilling to proceed further with the negotiation, after they had learned that he would not receive them as diplomatic agents and would not comply with their extreme demands. Here, then, was a ground for a real, but temporary, difference of opinion between the President and three members of his cabinet. On the one side, the President, holding these South Carolina gentlemen firmly in the attitude of private citizens of great weight and influence in their State, but denying to them any diplomatic character which he could recognize, and making them to clearly understand that the Executive would not withdraw the troops or surrender the forts, might well and wisely have considered that if he could draw from them any proposition which it would be fit for him to present to Congress, that body would have to express an authoritative opinion on the asserted right of secession. The great object of preserving the peace of the country, and of gaining time for angry passions to subside, might thus be gained. On the other hand, Judge Black and his two colleagues, considering, as the President considered, that these South Carolina citizens could not be recognized as commissioners of a foreign State, held that there could legally be no negotiation with them, whether they were willing or not. Reduced to the ultimate difference, the question was whether there should be no further conference at all, because it could have no legal force, or whether there might still be useful further communication with them as private citizens, whose propositions, if they chose to make any in that capacity, the President could submit to Congress for such action as that body might think proper.

There was still another objection made to the President's draft of an answer, which can be better appreciated, because the words which he proposed to use were quoted in Judge Black's paper of objections. These were the words: "Coercing a State by force of arms to remain in the Confederacy—a power which I do not believe the Constitution has conferred upon Congress." This was the same criticism which Judge Black

had made upon the message of December 3d, in which none of his colleagues had agreed with him. He now renewed the objection, representing to the President that the words were too vague and might have the effect (which he was sure the President did not intend) to mislead the commissioners concerning his sentiments. Judge Black's criticism was that to coerce the inhabitants of a State to obey the laws of the United States, a power which the President had always asserted, and meant still to assert, was in one sense to coerce the State to remain in the Union.

Another thing which Judge Black and his two colleagues deprecated was that the President's answer should contain the most remote implication that Major Anderson acted without authority in removing his force to Fort Sumter. But what there was in the President's draft of an answer to give rise to such an implication does not appear.

I should not have adverted to these objections to the President's proposed answer to the South Carolina commissioners, if Judge Black's paper of objections to it had not been given to the world; nor should I have deemed it necessary to consider or describe anything but the official answer that was actually sent. I hold that a supreme ruler, who acts with constitutional advisers, is entitled to be judged in history, not by what he may have written but did not use, nor by the greater or less necessity for a different paper, nor by the advice or the assistance which he received; but that he should be judged by his official act. But as this difference between President Buchanan and three members of his cabinet in regard to this particular paper, led to what has been called a "cabinet crisis," and as the objections submitted to him have been published, it is my duty to meet the whole occurrence squarely and directly.

It might be an interesting inquiry, how far a "cabinet crisis" had become necessary. But of this, the gentlemen who composed the cabinet were entitled to judge, because their personal honor and patriotism were involved in the question of their remaining in the cabinet, if they believed that the President was about to change his policy. They appear to have at first supposed that the President, after South Carolina had adopted an ordinance of secession, was about to make such a change in his policy as



would virtually reverse his position, and would finally lead to an admission of the right of secession, a result which would inevitably destroy him and his administration. In this, it is certain that they were mistaken. The President had not contemplated any such change in his position. I am justified in asserting this strongly.

Only four days before this cabinet crisis culminated, the President wrote a private letter to an editor in Washington whose paper was supposed to be his organ, strongly rebuking him for an editorial article favoring secession, and informing him that he (the President) must take steps to make known in some authentic way that the paper was not an organ of his administration.

Further than this, in every interview which the President had held before the 29th December, with any persons claiming to represent the people of South Carolina, he had uniformly and firmly declared that on the vital point of withdrawing the troops and surrendering the forts, he should make no concession whatever. But between the 17th and the 21st of December, an occurrence took place, which has a most important bearing upon the question whether the President had, before the 29th of December, determined to make any change in his attitude towards the people and authorities of South Carolina.

It will be remembered that the South Carolina ordinance of secession was adopted on the 20th of December. Before that time, however, the Governor of South Carolina, Mr. Pickens, saw fit to send a special messenger to Washington, with a letter from himself to the President, written at Columbia on the 17th of December, demanding that Fort Sumter be delivered into his (the Governor's) hands. This letter was written eight days before Major Anderson's removal to Sumter.\* The following memorandum in the President's handwriting describes what took place when the Governor's messenger arrived in Washington :

On Thursday morning, December 20th, 1860, Hamilton, late marshal of South Carolina, sent especially for this purpose, presented me a letter from

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\* The remarkable fact that this demand was made before South Carolina had "seceded," and before Anderson's removal, although the demand was subsequently withdrawn, shows how early the Executive of South Carolina had formed the determination to treat the presence of the United States troops in Charleston harbor as an offence against the dignity and safety of the State.

Governor Pickens, in the presence of Mr. Trescot, dated at Columbia, South Carolina, 17th December (Monday). He was to wait until this day (Friday afternoon) for my answer. The character of the letter will appear from the answer to it, which I had prepared. Thursday night, between nine and ten o'clock, Mr. Trescot called upon me. He said that he had seen Messrs. Bonham and McQueen of the South Carolina delegation; that they all agreed that this letter of Governor Pickens was in violation of the pledge which had been given by themselves not to make an assault upon the forts, but leave them in *statu quo* until the result of an application of commissioners to be appointed by the State was known; that Pickens, at Columbia, could not have known of the arrangements. They, to wit, Bonham, McQueen, and Trescot, had telegraphed to Pickens for authority to withdraw his letter.

Friday morning, 10 o'clock, 21st December.—Mr. Trescot called upon me with a telegram, of which the following is a copy from that which he delivered to me:

December 21st, 1860.—You are authorized and requested to withdraw my letter sent by Doctor Hamilton immediately. J. W. P.

Mr. Trescot read to me from the same telegram, that Governor Pickens had seen Mr. Cushing. The letter was accordingly withdrawn.

The following is the draft of the answer to Governor Pickens which the President was writing with his own hand when he was notified that the Governor's letter was withdrawn. Of course the answer was not concluded or sent; but it shows with the utmost clearness that the President's position on the subject of secession was taken, and was not to be changed by any menace of "consequences," coming from those who were disposed to be, as they must be, the aggressors, if any attempt should be made to disturb the Federal Government in the possession of its forts.

WASHINGTON, December 20, 1860.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favor of the 17th inst., by Mr. Hamilton. From it I deeply regret to observe that you seem entirely to have misapprehended my position, which I supposed had been clearly stated in my message. I have incurred, and shall incur, any reasonable risk within the clearly prescribed line of my executive duties to prevent a collision between the army and navy of the United States and the citizens of South Carolina in defence of the forts within the harbor of Charleston. Hence I have declined for the present to reinforce these forts, relying upon the honor of South Carolinians that they will not be assaulted whilst they remain in their present condition; but that commissioners will be sent by the convention *to treat with Congress* on the subject. I say with *Congress* because, as I state in my message, "Apart from

the execution of the laws, so far as this may be practicable, the Executive has no authority to decide what shall be the relations between the Federal Government and South Carolina. He has been invested with no such discretion. He possesses no power to change the relations heretofore existing between them, much less to acknowledge the independence of that State. This would be to invest a mere executive officer with the power of recognizing the dissolution of the confederacy among our thirty-three sovereign States. It bears no resemblance to the recognition of a foreign *de facto* government, involving no such responsibility. Any attempt to do this would, on my part, be a naked act of usurpation."

As an executive officer of the Government, I have no power to surrender to any human authority Fort Sumter, or any of the other forts or public property in South Carolina. To do this, would on my part, as I have already said, be a naked act of usurpation. It is for Congress to decide this question, and for me to preserve the status of the public property as I found it at the commencement of the troubles.

If South Carolina should attack any of these forts, she will then become the assailant in a war against the United States. It will not then be a question of coercing a State to remain in the Union, to which I am utterly opposed, as my message proves, but it will be a question of voluntarily precipitating a conflict of arms on her part, without even consulting the only authorities which possess the power to act upon the subject. Between independent governments, if one possesses a fortress within the limits of another, and the latter should seize it without calling upon the appropriate authorities of the power in possession to surrender it, this would not only be a just cause of war, but the actual commencement of hostilities.

No authority was given, as you suppose, from myself, or from the War Department, to Governor Gist, to guard the United States arsenal in Charleston by a company of South Carolina volunteers. In this respect you have been misinformed. I have, therefore, never been more astonished in my life, than to learn from you that unless Fort Sumter be delivered into your hands, you cannot be answerable for the consequences.

It was, then, on the President's first draft of an answer to the South Carolina commissioners, after the secession ordinance had been passed, and upon nothing that had previously occurred, that the cabinet crisis arose. On the evening of December 29th, the President's proposed draft of an answer to the commissioners was read to the cabinet. It was not much discussed, for it was not the habit of the ministers to criticise state papers which the President had himself prepared. But on the following day, Judge Black informed Mr. Toucey, the Secretary of the Navy, of his purpose to resign, if this paper, as written by the Presi-

dent, should be delivered to the commissioners. The President sent for Judge Black, and handed him the paper, with a request that he modify it to suit himself, and return it immediately. Judge Black then prepared his memorandum for the President's consideration, in which Mr. Holt and Mr. Stanton concurred. The answer, which was to be sent to the commissioners, was modified accordingly, and when sent it read as follows:\*

[ANSWER OF THE PRESIDENT TO THE SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSIONERS.]

WASHINGTON, December 31, 1860.

GENTLEMEN:—

I have had the honor to receive your communication of 26th inst., together with a copy of your "full powers from the Convention of the people of South Carolina," authorizing you to treat with the Government of the United States on various important subjects therein mentioned, and also a copy of the ordinance bearing date on the 20th inst., declaring that "the union now subsisting between South Carolina and other States, under the name of 'the United States of America,' is hereby dissolved."

In answer to this communication, I have to say that my position as President of the United States was clearly defined in the message to Congress of the 3d instant. In that I stated that, "apart from the execution of the laws, so far as this may be practicable, the Executive has no authority to decide what shall be the relations between the Federal Government and South Carolina. He has been invested with no such discretion. He possesses no power to change the relations heretofore existing between them, much less to acknowledge the independence of that State. This would be to invest a mere executive officer with the power of recognizing the dissolution of the confederacy among our thirty-three sovereign States. It bears no resemblance to the recognition of a foreign *de facto* government—involving no such responsibility. Any attempt to do this would, on his part, be a naked act of usurpation. It is, therefore, my duty to submit to Congress the whole question, in all its bearings."

Such is my opinion still. I could, therefore, meet you only as private gentlemen of the highest character, and was entirely willing to communicate to Congress any proposition you might have to make to that body upon the subject. Of this you were well aware. It was my earnest desire that such a disposition might be made of the whole subject by Congress, who alone possesses the power, as to prevent the inauguration of a civil war between the parties in regard to the possession of the Federal forts in the harbor of Charleston, and I, therefore, deeply regret that, in your opinion, "the events of the

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\* Mr. Jefferson Davis has erroneously given to this letter the date of December 30th. Its true date was December 31st. (See Mr. Davis's *Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government*, vol. I., p. 592.)

last twenty-four hours render this impossible." In conclusion, you urge upon me "the immediate withdrawal of the troops from the harbor of Charleston," stating that, "under present circumstances, they are a standing menace, which renders negotiation impossible, and, as our present experience shows, threatens speedily to bring to a bloody issue questions which ought to be settled with temperance and judgment."

The reason for this change in your position is that, since your arrival in Washington, "an officer of the United States acting as we (you) are assured, not only without your (my) orders, has dismantled one fort and occupied another, thus altering, to a most important extent, the condition of affairs under which we (you) came." You also allege that you came here "the representatives of an authority which could at any time within the past sixty days have taken possession of the forts in Charleston harbor, but which upon pledges given in a manner that we (you) cannot doubt, determined to trust to your (my) honor rather than to its own power."

This brings me to a consideration of the nature of those alleged pledges, and in what manner they have been observed. In my message of the 3d of December last, I stated, in regard to the property of the United States in South Carolina, that it "has been purchased for a fair equivalent 'by the consent of the legislature of the State, for the erection of forts, magazines, arsenals,' etc., and over these the authority 'to exercise exclusive legislation' has been expressly granted by the Constitution to Congress. It is not believed that any attempt will be made to expel the United States from this property by force; but, if in this I should prove to be mistaken, the officer in command of the forts has received orders to act strictly on the defensive. In such a contingency, the responsibility for consequences would rightfully rest upon the heads of the assailants." This being the condition of the parties on Saturday, 8th December, four of the representatives from South Carolina, called upon me and requested an interview. We had an earnest conversation on the subject of these forts, and the best means of preventing a collision between the parties, for the purpose of sparing the effusion of blood. I suggested, for prudential reasons, that it would be best to put in writing what they said to me verbally. They did so accordingly, and on Monday morning the 10th instant, three of them presented to me a paper signed by all the representatives from South Carolina, with a single exception, of which the following is a copy:

"TO HIS EXCELLENCY JAMES BUCHANAN,  
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES:

"In compliance with our statement to you yesterday, we now express to you our strong convictions that neither the constituted authorities, nor any body of the people of the State of South Carolina, will either attack or molest the United States forts in the harbor of Charleston, previously to the action of the convention, and, we hope and believe, not until an offer has been made, through an accredited representative, to negotiate for an amicable arrange-

ment of all matters between the State and the Federal Government, provided that no reinforcements shall be sent into those forts, and their relative military *status* shall remain as at present.

"JOHN MCQUEEN,  
"WILLIAM PORCHER MILES,  
"M. L. BONHAM,  
"W. W. BOYCE,  
"LAWRENCE M. KEITT.

"WASHINGTON, December 9, 1860."

And here I must, in justice to myself, remark that, at the time the paper was presented to me, I objected to the word "provided," as it might be construed into an agreement on my part, which I never would make. They said that nothing was further from their intention; they did not so understand it, and I should not so consider it. It is evident they could enter into no reciprocal agreement with me on the subject. They did not profess to have authority to do this, and were acting in their individual character. I considered it as nothing more, in effect, than the promise of highly honorable gentlemen to exert their influence for the purpose expressed. The event has proved that they have faithfully kept this promise, although I have never since received a line from any one of them, or from any member of the convention on the subject. It is well known that it was my determination, and this I freely expressed, not to reinforce the forts in the harbor and thus produce a collision, until they had been actually attacked, or until I had certain evidence that they were about to be attacked. This paper I received most cordially, and considered it as a happy omen that peace might still be preserved, and that time might thus be gained for reflection. This is the whole foundation for the alleged pledge.

But I acted in the same manner I would have done had I entered into a positive and formal agreement with parties capable of contracting, although such an agreement would have been, on my part, from the nature of my official duties, impossible.

The world knows that I have never sent any reinforcements to the forts in Charleston harbor, and I have certainly never authorized any change to be made "in their relative military *status*."

Bearing upon this subject, I refer you to an order issued by the Secretary of War, on the 11th instant, to Major Anderson, but not brought to my notice until the 21st instant. It is as follows:

"Memorandum of verbal instructions to Major Anderson, First Artillery, commanding Fort Moultrie, South Carolina:

"You are aware of the great anxiety of the Secretary of War that a collision of the troops with the people of this State shall be avoided, and of his studied determination to pursue a course with reference to the military force and forts in this harbor, which shall guard against such a collision. He has, therefore, carefully abstained from increasing the force at this point, or taking

any measures which might add to the present excited state of the public mind, or which would throw any doubt on the confidence he feels that South Carolina will not attempt by violence to obtain possession of the public works, or to interfere with their occupancy. But, as the counsel of rash and impulsive persons may possibly disappoint these expectations of the Government, he deems it proper that you should be prepared with instructions to meet so unhappy a contingency. He has, therefore, directed me, verbally, to give you such instructions.

"You are carefully to avoid every act which would needlessly tend to provoke aggression; and, for that reason, you are not, without evident and imminent necessity, to take up any position which could be construed into the assumption of a hostile attitude; but you are to hold possession of the forts in this harbor and, if attacked, you are to defend yourself to the last extremity. The smallness of your force will not permit you, perhaps, to occupy more than one of the three forts; but an attack on, or an attempt to take possession of, either of them will be regarded as an act of hostility, and you may then put your command into either of them which you deem most proper to increase its power of resistance. You are also authorized to take similar defensive steps whenever you have tangible evidence of a design to proceed to a hostile act.

"D. P. BUTLER, Assistant Adjutant General.

"FORT MOULTRIE, SOUTH CAROLINA, December 11, 1860.

"This is in conformity to my instructions to Major Buell.

"JOHN B. FLOYD, Secretary of War."

These were the last instructions transmitted to Major Anderson before his removal to Fort Sumter, with a single exception in regard to a particular which does not, in any degree, affect the present question. Under these circumstances it is clear that Major Anderson acted upon his own responsibility, and without authority, unless, indeed, he had "tangible evidence of a design to proceed to a hostile act" on the part of the authorities of South Carolina, which has not yet been alleged. Still he is a brave and honorable officer, and justice requires that he should not be condemned without a fair hearing.

Be this as it may, when I learned that Major Anderson had left Fort Moultrie, and proceeded to Fort Sumter, my first promptings were to command him to return to his former position, and there to await the contingencies presented in his instructions. This could only have been done, with any degree of safety to the command, by the concurrence of the South Carolina authorities. But before any steps could possibly have been taken in this direction, we received information, dated on the 28th instant, that "the Palmetto flag floated out to the breeze at Castle Pinckney, and a large military force went over last night (the 27th) to Fort Moultrie." Thus the authorities of South Carolina, without waiting or asking for any explanation, and doubtless believing, as you have expressed it, that the officer had acted not only

without, but against my orders, on the very next day after the night when the removal was made, seized by a military force two of the three Federal forts in the harbor of Charleston, and have covered them under their own flag, instead of that of the United States. At this gloomy period of our history, startling events succeed each other rapidly. On the very day (the 27th instant) that possession of these two forts was taken, the Palmetto flag was raised over the Federal custom house and post office in Charleston; and on the same day every officer of the customs—collector, naval officer, surveyor, and appraisers—resigned their offices. And this, although it was well known, from the language of my message, that as an executive officer I felt myself bound to collect the revenue at the port of Charleston under the existing laws. In the harbor of Charleston we now find three forts confronting each other, over all of which the Federal flag floated only four days ago; but now, over two of them this flag has been supplanted, and the Palmetto flag has been substituted in its stead. It is under all these circumstances that I am urged immediately to withdraw the troops from the harbor of Charleston, and am informed that, without this, negotiation is impossible. This I cannot do; this I will not do. Such an idea was never thought of by me in any possible contingency. No allusion to it had ever been made in any communication between myself and any human being. But the inference is, that I am bound to withdraw the troops from the only fort remaining in the possession of the United States in the harbor of Charleston, because the officer then in command of all the forts thought proper, without instructions, to change his position from one of them to another. I cannot admit the justice of any such inference.

At this point of writing I have received information, by telegram, from Captain Humphreys, in command of the arsenal at Charleston, that "it has to-day (Sunday the 30th) been taken by force of arms." It is estimated that the munitions of war belonging to the United States in this arsenal are worth half a million of dollars.

Comment is needless. After this information, I have only to add that, while it is my duty to defend Fort Sumter, as a portion of the public property of the United States, against hostile attacks from whatever quarter they may come, by such means as I may possess for this purpose, I do not perceive how such a defence can be construed into a menace against the city of Charleston.

With great personal regard, I remain, yours very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

In all that related to this cabinet crisis of December 29th, I can see nothing but the prompt action of a wise statesman and a patriotic President, in preventing a disruption of his cabinet upon a draft of a State paper, in which expressions had been used that might have given rise to inferences which the President never intended should be drawn. Among all Mr.



Buchanan's claims to stand in history as a great man, be the criticisms made by the three members of his cabinet on his proposed answer to the South Carolina commissioners more or less important, there is no one act which better entitles him to that rank, than the sacrifice which he made on this occasion of all pride of opinion in respect to the best mode of doing what he and his advisers alike meant to do, in order that the country might not, at this critical juncture, be deprived of the services of men whose services were important to her, and in order that the Government of the Union might not be placed in a false position. He had formed no new policy on the subject of secession, or any new views of his public duty. He never had but one policy, from the beginning of the secession movement to the 4th of March, 1861. Of that policy no concession of the right of secession, or of any claim founded on it, ever formed a part.\*

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\* In the *North American Review*, during the year 1879, certain papers were published under the title of "Diary of a Public Man," without disclosure of the authorship. These papers purported to be passages from a diary kept by a person in some public, or quasi public, position in Washington, during the autumn and winter of 1860-61. Inquiry by the author of this work has failed to elicit any information of the name of the writer, the editor of the *Review* declining to disclose it. The statements made in these papers are therefore anonymous, and readers will judge how far they should be regarded as reliable materials of history. There is, however, one of these statements, which it is my duty to notice, because the unknown writer professes to make it on the authority of Senator Douglas. It purports to have been committed to writing on the 28th of February, 1861, and is as follows: "Before going, Senator Douglas had a word to say about President Buchanan and the South Carolina commissioners. He tells me that it has now been ascertained that the President nominated his Pennsylvania collector at Charleston on the very day, almost at the very moment, when he was assuring Colonel Orr, through one of his retainers, that he was disposed to accede to the demands of South Carolina, if they were courteously and with proper respect presented to him. They rewrote their letter accordingly, submitted it to the President's agents, who approved it and sent it to the White House. This, Senator Douglas says, was on January 3d, in the morning. The commissioners spent the afternoon in various places, and dined out early. On coming in, they found their letter to the President awaiting them. It had been returned to them by a messenger from the White House, about three o'clock P. M., and on the back was an indorsement, not signed by any one, and in a clerkly handwriting, to the effect that the President declined to receive the communication. They ordered their trunks packed at once, and left for home by way of Richmond, on the four o'clock morning train, feeling, not unreasonably, that they had been both duped and insulted."—(*North American Review*, vol. cxxix, p. 269.)

There are a very few grains of truth in this story, mixed with a great deal of untruth. Mr. Douglas may have found it floating about Washington, and may have repeated it to the diarist who remains shrouded in mystery. The nomination of a collector for the port of Charleston was made to the Senate on the same day on which the President returned the letter of the commissioners. This was on the 2d of January, not the 3d. But it cannot be true that the President, through any channel, assured Colonel Orr that he was disposed to accede to the demands of South Carolina, if courteously and with proper respect presented to him; or that they had written one letter which was in improper terms, and then wrote another in proper terms, and sent it, after it had been submitted to "the President's agents," and been by them received. The actual occurrence was as follows: The sole personal interview which

The next thing that happened was, that after the reading in the Senate of the President's special message of January 8th, Mr. Jefferson Davis produced and had read in the Senate, a copy of the commissioners' insulting letter. "Such," says Mr. Buchanan, "was the temper of that body at the time, that it was received and read, and entered upon their journal. . . . It is worth notice, that whilst this letter of the commissioners was published at length in the *Congressional Globe*, among the proceedings of the Senate, their previous letter to the President of the 28th of December, and his answer thereto of the 31st, were never published in this so-called official register, although copies of both had accompanied his special message. By this means, the offensive letter was scattered broadcast over the country, whilst the letter of the President, to which this professed to be an answer, was buried in one of the numerous and long after published volumes of executive documents."\* The story related

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the President had with the commissioners was on the 28th of December. On the 29th they presented to him in writing their demand for the withdrawal of the troops from the harbor of Charleston as a preliminary step to any negotiation. On the 31st the President's answer, settled in a meeting of the cabinet, was transmitted to them. It was a positive and distinct refusal to withdraw the troops. The reply of the commissioners, dated on the 2d of January, reached the White House at about three o'clock on that day, while the cabinet was in session. "It was," says Mr. Buchanan, "so violent, unfounded, and disrespectful, and so regardless of what is due to any individual whom the people have honored with the office of President, that the reading of it in the cabinet excited much indignation among all the members." (Buchanan's Defence, p. 183.) The President thereupon wrote upon a slip of paper, which is now before me, the following words: "This paper, just presented to the President, is of such a character that he declines to receive it." This slip he handed immediately to his private secretary, to be indorsed on the commissioners' letter. Of what then happened, I find the following memorandum in the handwriting of the secretary:

JANUARY 2, 1861.

The paper which, I am told, came in this envelope, was handed to me by the President at about 3:30 o'clock, with instructions to enclose it in an envelope and direct it to Hon. R. W. Barnwell, James H. Adams and James S. Orr, and to deliver it to them or either of them. I directed it accordingly, and proceeded to the lodgings of the gentlemen addressed in Franklyn Row. I was informed at the door by a servant that neither of the gentlemen were in. Having met Mr. Trescott at the door, I inquired whether he would receive the paper. He declined to do so, on the ground that he had no official connection with the gentlemen to whom it was addressed. At my request he then proceeded with me to the room which these gentlemen occupied for business purposes, and, also at my request, witnessed the deposit of the paper upon a table in that room; the same room in which I found two of the gentlemen—Messrs. Barnwell and Adams—on a previous occasion (Monday last), when I delivered to the first-named gentleman a letter similarly addressed from the President. While I was in the room Hon. Jefferson Davis and Senator Wigfall came in, the first of whom certainly, and the latter probably, did see the paper deposited, as stated. This memorandum made within an hour after the delivery or deposit of the paper.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE.

A. J. GLOSSBRENNER,  
Private Secretary to the President.

\* Buchanan's Defence, p. 184.

to the unknown diarist, as he says, by Senator Douglas, implies that the commissioners, at some time between the 31st of December and the 2d of January, wrote an uncourteous and improper reply to the President's letter of December 31st, and then substituted for it a courteous and proper one, which they submitted to "the President's agents," who approved of it and sent it to the White House! That the President, through any agent, had signified to the commissioners that he was disposed to accede to their demands, if presented in courteous and proper terms, is an assertion that is contradicted by the whole tenor of his letter of December 31st, and by his uniform and steady refusal to entertain the proposition of an executive surrender of the forts to South Carolina. Down to the moment when the commissioners received the President's letter of December 31st, he had no occasion to make with them any condition relating to the *manner* of their reply; and to suppose that at any time he meant to allow his compliance with their demands to turn upon the language in which they presented them, is simply absurd. What he may have signified to them was, that he would refer their demands to Congress; not that he would entertain and act upon them himself. This we know that he did, at the personal interview on the 28th of December; and he did it in order "to bring the whole subject before the representatives of the people in such a manner as to cause them to express an authoritative opinion on secession and the other dangerous questions then before the country, and adopt such measures for their peaceable adjustment as might possibly reclaim even South Carolina herself; but whether or not, might prevent the other cotton States from following her evil and rash example."\* The President did not expect that Congress would authorize him to surrender the forts; but he did believe that it would be beneficial to have Congress declare that the whole doctrine of secession was one that could not be accepted by any department of the Federal Government, as he had declared that it could not be accepted by the Executive. The South Carolina commissioners, in their letter of December 28th, claimed that the State has "resumed the powers she delegated to the Government of

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\* Buchanan's Defence, p. 184.

the United States, and has declared her perfect sovereignty and independence;" that unless Major Anderson's removal to Fort Sumter was explained in a satisfactory manner, they must suspend all discussion of the arrangements by which the mutual interests of this independent State and the United States could be adjusted; and then, as a preliminary to any negotiation, they urged the immediate withdrawal of the troops from the harbor of Charleston, with a distinct intimation of a "bloody issue" if this should be refused. The President was thus brought to the alternatives of an Executive admission of the independence of South Carolina, by reason of her secession, and a withdrawal of the troops as a consequence, or a bloody issue of questions that ought to be settled amicably. The President's answer of the 31st of December, being a rejection of what was demanded of him, although entirely courteous, so irritated the commissioners that they wrote the reply which he returned to them.\* The truth is, that this reply contained so many offensive and unfounded imputations of past bad faith on the part of the President, that it was impossible for him to receive it. The grossest of these imputations I have already dealt with.

The diarist of the *North American Review* has related another story, on the authority of a person whose name, as well as his own, he conceals, which imputes to Major Anderson a motive of a most extraordinary character, for taking possession of Fort Sumter. We thus have the anonymous fortified by the anonymous—*ignotum per ignotum*—as the historical basis of belief. The statement is that the diarist's informant, who had just come from Montgomery and had passed through Charleston, where he conversed with Major Anderson, told the diarist, on the 6th of March (1861), in Washington, that Anderson intended to be governed in his future course by the course of his own State of Kentucky; that if Kentucky should secede, Anderson would unhesitatingly obey the orders of a Confederate secretary of war; that he meant to retain the control of the position primarily in the interests of his own State of Kentucky; and that for this reason he removed from Fort Moultrie where he was

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\* A copy of this intended reply may be found in Mr. Jefferson Davis's work, vol. i., Appendix G.

liable to be controlled by the authorities of South Carolina.\* The diarist took his informant to President Lincoln, who heard the tale repeated, but parried it by one or two of his characteristic jests, and the diarist was disappointed in not being able to divine how Mr. Lincoln was affected by the narrative. It will require something more than this kind of unsupported and unauthenticated nonsense to destroy Major Anderson's reputation as a loyal officer of the United States. What he might have done with his commission, in case Kentucky had joined the Southern Confederacy, is one thing. What he would have done with Fort Sumter is a very different matter. His answer to a letter of General Dix does not accord with the account of his intentions given by the unknown informant of the unknown diarist.

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\* *North American Review*, vol. cxxix, pp. 484-485.

† See the correspondence between General Dix and Major Anderson, *post.*

## CHAPTER XIX.

December, 1860,—January, 1861.

RESIGNATION OF GENERAL CASS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE—  
RECONSTRUCTION OF THE CABINET WHICH FOLLOWED AFTER THE  
RESIGNATIONS OF MESSRS. COBB, THOMPSON, AND THOMAS.

SERIOUS and embarrassing as was the situation of the country, it was not to have been expected that the first person to leave an administration, which had worked together with entire harmony for nearly four years, would be the Secretary of State, General Cass. I shall make but few comments on this occurrence. The correspondence which took place between General Cass and the President, and a memorandum made by the latter at the time, sufficiently show what degree of necessity there was for the General's resignation. With reference to the reason which he assigned for it, the date of his letter is important to be observed. He tendered his resignation at a time when every consideration of prudence forbade the sending of further military or naval forces into the harbor of Charleston; after his advice on this point had been overruled by the opinions of all the other members of the cabinet, and of the President; before the State of South Carolina had adopted her ordinance of secession; and while the collector of the revenue at Charleston was still faithfully, and without molestation, performing his duties. If it was the General's sagacity which led him to foresee that the State would "secede," that the collector would resign, and that the revenue would have to be collected outside of the custom house, and by some other officer, his suggestions could not be carried out by the President without authority of law, and the whole subject was then before Congress, submitted to it by the President's annual message, in which the General himself had fully concurred. That the General regretted his resignation, and would have withdrawn it, if

permitted, is now made certain by the President's memorandum, which I shall presently cite.

[SECRETARY CASS TO THE PRESIDENT.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE, December 12th, 1860.

SIR:—

The present alarming crisis in our national affairs has engaged your serious consideration, and in your recent message, you have expressed to Congress, and through Congress to the country, the views you have formed respecting the questions, fraught with the most momentous consequences, which are now presented to the American people for solution. With the general principles laid down in that message I fully concur, and I appreciate with warm sympathy its patriotic appeals and suggestions. What measures it is competent and proper for the Executive to adopt under existing circumstances, is a subject which has received your most careful attention, and with the anxious hope, as I well know, from having participated in the deliberations, that tranquility and good feeling may be speedily restored to this agitated and divided Confederacy.

In some points which I deem of vital importance, it has been my misfortune to differ from you.

It has been my decided opinion, which for some time past I have urged at various meetings of the cabinet, that additional troops should be sent to reinforce the forts in the harbor of Charleston, with a view to their better defence, should they be attacked, and that an armed vessel should likewise be ordered there, to aid, if necessary, in the defence, and also, should it be required, in the collection of the revenue; and it is yet my opinion that these measures should be adopted without the least delay. I have likewise urged the expediency of immediately removing the custom house at Charleston to one of the forts in the port, and of making arrangements for the collection of the duties there, by having a collector and other officers ready to act when necessary, so that when the office may become vacant, the proper authority may be there to collect the duties on the part of the United States. I continue to think that these arrangements should be immediately made. While the right and the responsibility of deciding belong to you, it is very desirable that at this perilous juncture there should be, as far as possible, unanimity in your councils, with a view to safe and efficient action.

I have, therefore, felt it my duty to tender you my resignation of the office of Secretary of State, and to ask your permission to retire from that official association with yourself and the members of your cabinet, which I have enjoyed during almost four years, without the occurrence of a single incident to interrupt the personal intercourse which has so happily existed.

I cannot close this letter without bearing my testimony to the zealous and earnest devotion to the best interests of the country, with which, during a term of unexampled trials and troubles, you have sought to discharge the duties of your high station.

Thanking you for the kindness and confidence you have not ceased to manifest towards me, and with the expression of my warmest regard both for yourself and the gentlemen of your cabinet, I am, sir, with great respect,

Your obedient servant,

LEWIS CASS.

[THE PRESIDENT TO GENERAL CASS.]

WASHINGTON, December 15th, 1860.

SIR:—

I have received your resignation of the office of Secretary of State with surprise and regret. After we had passed through nearly the whole term of the administration with mutual and cordial friendship and regard, I had cherished the earnest hope that nothing might occur to disturb our official relations until its end. You have decided differently, and I have no right to complain.

I must express my gratification at your concurrence with the general principles laid down in my late message, and your appreciation, "with warm sympathy, of its patriotic appeals and suggestions." This I value very highly; and I rejoice that we concur in the opinion that Congress does not possess the power, under the Constitution, to coerce a State by force of arms to remain in the Confederacy.

The question on which we unfortunately differ is that of ordering a detachment of the army and navy to Charleston, and is correctly stated in your letter of resignation. I do not intend to argue this question. Suffice it to say, that your remarks upon the subject were heard by myself and the cabinet, with all the respect due to your high position, your long experience, and your unblemished character; but they failed to convince us of the necessity and propriety, under existing circumstances, of adopting such a measure. The Secretaries of War and of the Navy, through whom the orders must have issued to reinforce the forts, did not concur in your views; and whilst the whole responsibility for the refusal rested upon myself, they were the members of the cabinet more directly interested. You may have judged correctly on this important question, and your opinion is entitled to grave consideration; but under my convictions of duty, and believing as I do that no present necessity exists for a resort to force for the protection of the public property, it was impossible for me to have risked a collision of arms in the harbor of Charleston, and thereby defeated the reasonable hope which I cherish of the final triumph of the Constitution and of the Union.

I have only to add that you will take with you into retirement my heartfelt wishes that the evening of your days may be prosperous and happy.

Very respectfully yours,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

The following memorandum, relating to the resignation of General Cass, is now before me in the President's handwriting:



Tuesday, Dec. 11th, 1860.

General Cass announced to me his purpose to resign.

Saturday, December 15th.

Judge Black, in the evening, delivered me General Cass's letter of resignation, dated on Wednesday, December 12th.

I was very much surprised on the 11th December to learn from General Cass that he intended to resign. All our official intercourse up till this moment had been marked by unity of purpose, sentiment and action. Indeed, the General had always been treated by me with extreme kindness. This was due to his age and his high character. Most of the important despatches which bear his name were written, or chiefly written, for him by Mr. Appleton, Judge Black and myself. His original drafts were generally so prolix and so little to the point, that they had to be written over again entirely, or so little was suffered to remain as to make them new despatches. All this was done with so much delicacy and tenderness, that, to the extent of my knowledge, General Cass always cheerfully and even gratefully assented. So timid was he, and so little confidence had he in himself, that it was difficult for him to arrive at any decision of the least consequence. He brought many questions to me which he ought to have settled himself. When obliged to decide for himself, he called Mr. Cobb and Judge Black to his assistance. In the course of the administration I have been often reminded of the opinion of him expressed to me by General Jackson.

I had been at the War Department a short time before General Cass was appointed minister to France. In the course of conversation, he made particular inquiries of me as to what I thought an American minister would have to expend at the principal courts abroad. I told him what it had cost me at St. Petersburg, and what would be the probable cost at London and Paris.

The next time I met General Jackson, I said to him, "So you are going to send General Cass to Paris." His answer was, "How do you know that?" I said, "I can't tell you, but I believe it." His reply was, "It is true. I can no longer consent to do the duties both of President and Secretary of War. General Cass will decide nothing for himself, but comes to me constantly with great bundles of papers, to decide questions for him which he ought to decide for himself."

His resignation was the more remarkable on account of the cause he assigned for it. When my late message (of December, 1860) was read to the cabinet before it was printed, General Cass expressed his unreserved and hearty approbation of it, accompanied by every sign of deep and sincere feeling. He had but one objection to it, and this was, *that it was not sufficiently strong against the power of Congress to make war upon a State for the purpose of compelling her to remain in the Union*; and the denial of this power was made more emphatic and distinct upon his own suggestion.

On Monday, 17th December, 1860, both Mr. Thompson and Judge Black informed me that they had held conversations with General Cass on the subject of his resignation, and that he had expressed a desire to withdraw it, and

return to the cabinet. I gave this no encouragement. His purpose to resign had been known for several days, and his actual resignation had been prepared three days before it was delivered to me. The world knew all about it, and had he returned, the explanation would have been very embarrassing. Besides, I knew full well that his fears would have worried the administration as well as himself, in the difficult times which were then upon us. His great error was, that he would assume no responsibility which he could possibly avoid.

There is strong reason to think that General Cass was mistaken in saying in his letter to the President that he had proposed in the cabinet to remove the Charleston custom house to one of the forts or to appoint a new collector. In a draft of the President's answer to General Cass, prepared by Judge Black, but which the President did not use, it is stated that none of the members of the cabinet had any recollection of such a proposal. But if it had been made, it would have been improper to collect the revenue in any other than the ordinary way, and at the proper place, without new legislation, or at least until circumstances had made a military collection absolutely necessary.

It is not to be doubted that the resignation of General Cass was a misfortune to the administration, because it gave to its enemies opportunity to say that he distrusted either the present or the future course of the President. But his place was immediately supplied by the appointment of Judge Black as Secretary of State. Edwin M. Stanton became Attorney General, in the room of Judge Black.\*

In the early part of January, 1861, while the President was still engaged in considering the measures proper to be adopted in regard to Fort Sumter, other changes in the cabinet took place. After the resignations of General Cass, Governor Floyd, and Mr. Cobb, the cabinet stood as follows: Jeremiah S. Black, of Pennsylvania, Secretary of State, Philip Thomas, of Maryland, Secretary of the Treasury, Joseph Holt, of Kentucky, Secretary of War, Isaac Toucey, of Connecticut, Secretary of the Navy, Jacob Thompson, of Mississippi, Secretary of the Interior, Horatio King, of Maine, Postmaster General, Edwin

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\* How Mr. Stanton came to receive this appointment, may be learned by referring to a private letter from Mr. Buchanan, quoted hereafter.

M. Stanton, of Pennsylvania, Attorney General. Mr. Thomas, who had been Commissioner of Patents, was made Secretary of the Treasury in the place of Mr. Cobb, on the 8th of December. He resigned on the 11th of January, and the President immediately invited General Dix to fill the office. General Dix at once repaired to Washington, and during the remainder of the administration he was the guest of the President at the White House. His society, and his important aid in the administration of the Government, afforded to Mr. Buchanan the highest satisfaction.\* On the resignation of Mr. Thompson as Secretary of the Interior, that department was not filled, but the duties were ably and faithfully performed by Moses Kelly, the Chief Clerk, until the close of the administration. The circumstances attending the resignations of Messrs. Thompson and Thomas are sufficiently disclosed by the correspondence.

[SECRETARY THOMPSON TO THE PRESIDENT.]

WASHINGTON, D. C., Jan 8, 1861.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY, JAMES BUCHANAN, PRESIDENT U. S.:—

SIR:—It is with extreme regret I have just learned that additional troops have been ordered to Charleston. This subject has been frequently discussed

\* General Dix had for some time held the office of Postmaster in the City of New York; a place he consented to fill under the circumstances disclosed in the following letter to President Buchanan :

NEW YORK, May 14, 1860.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favor of the 12th inst., and am greatly indebted to you for your kind suggestion in regard to the appointment of commissioners under the treaty with Paraguay. I should regret very much to decline any service in which you think I could be useful. I am at this moment very much occupied here with matters which concern the comfort of my family, and I should wish, before giving a final answer, to communicate with my wife, who is in Boston. I had scarcely read your letter before I received a note from Mr. Schell, who desired to see me in regard to the astounding defalcation in the city post office. He said it was deemed important to place some one in the office in whom the administration could confide, and that my name had been suggested among others. Now, my dear sir, you can readily understand that it is a place I do not want, and could not consent to hold for any length of time. But, as I said to Mr. Schell, if you desire it, and think I can be of any service to your administration, in coöperating with the proper department to put matters on a right footing, I should not, under the peculiar circumstances, feel at liberty to disregard your wishes. In other words, I think you have the right, under the exigencies of the case, to command the services of any friend. I am, dear sir, sincerely yours,

JOHN A. DIX.

For an account of General Dix's connection with the New York post office, and of his services to Mr. Buchanan's administration as Secretary of the Treasury, see his Life, by his son, the Rev. Morgan Dix, D. D., recently published by Harper & Brothers.

in cabinet council, and when on Monday night, 31st of December ult., the orders for reinforcements to Fort Sumter were countermanded, I distinctly understood from you, that no order of the kind would be made without being previously considered and decided in cabinet. It is true that on Wednesday, January 2d, this subject was again discussed in cabinet, but certainly no conclusion was reached, and the War Department was not justified in ordering reinforcements without something [more] than was then said. I learn, however, this morning, for the first time, that the steamer *Star* of the West sailed from New York on last Saturday night with two hundred and fifty men under Lieut. Bartlett, bound for Fort Sumter. Under these circumstances I feel myself bound to resign my commission as one of your constitutional advisers into your hands. With high respect your obedient servant,

J. THOMPSON.

[THE PRESIDENT TO MR. THOMPSON.]

WASHINGTON, January 9, 1861.

SIR :—

I have received and accepted your resignation on yesterday of the office of Secretary of the Interior.

On Monday evening, 31st December, 1860, I suspended the orders which had been issued by the War and Navy Department to send the Brooklyn with reinforcements to Fort Sumter. Of this I informed you on the same evening. I stated to you my reasons for this suspension, which you knew from its nature would be speedily removed. In consequence of your request, however, I promised that orders should not be renewed "without being previously considered and decided in cabinet."

This promise was faithfully observed on my part. In order to carry it into effect, I called a special cabinet meeting on Wednesday, 2d January, 1861, in which the question of sending reinforcements to Fort Sumter was amply discussed both by yourself and others. The decided majority of opinions was against you. At this moment the answer of the South Carolina "commissioners" to my communication to them of the 31st December was received and read. It produced much indignation among members of the cabinet. After a further brief conversation I employed the following language: "It is now all over, and reinforcements must be sent." Judge Black said, at the moment of my decision, that after this letter the cabinet would be unanimous, and I heard no dissenting voice. Indeed, the spirit and tone of the letter left no doubt on my mind that Fort Sumter would be immediately attacked, and hence the necessity of sending reinforcements there without delay.

Whilst you admit "that on Wednesday, January 2d, this subject was again discussed in cabinet," you say, "but certainly no conclusion was reached, and the War Department was not justified in ordering reinforcements without something [more] than was then said." You are certainly mistaken in alleging that no "conclusion was reached." In this your recollection is

entirely different from that of your four oldest colleagues in the cabinet. Indeed, my language was so unmistakable, that the Secretaries of War and the Navy proceeded to act upon it without any further intercourse with myself than what you heard or might have heard me say. You had been so emphatic in opposing these reinforcements, that I thought you would resign in consequence of my decision. I deeply regret that you have been mistaken in point of fact, though I firmly believe honestly mistaken. Still it is certain you have not the less been mistaken. Yours very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. THOMPSON TO THE PRESIDENT.]

WASHINGTON CITY, January 10, 1861.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY, JAMES BUCHANAN, PRESIDENT OF U. S. :—

DEAR SIR :—In your reply to my note of 8th inst., accepting my resignation, you are right when you say that “you (I) had been so emphatic in opposing these reinforcements that I (you) thought you (I) would resign in consequence of my decision.” I came to the cabinet on Wednesday, January 2d, with the full expectation I would resign my commission before I left your council board, and I know you do not doubt that my action would have been promptly taken, had I understood on that day that you had decided that “reinforcements must now be sent.” For more than forty days, I have regarded the display of a military force in Charleston or along the Southern coast by the United States as tantamount to war. Of this opinion you and all my colleagues of the cabinet have been frankly advised. Believing that such would be the construction of an order for additional troops, I have been anxious, and have used all legitimate means to save you and your administration from precipitating the country into an inevitable conflict, the end of which no human being could foresee. My counsels have not prevailed, troops have been sent, and I hope yet that a kind Providence may avert the consequences I have apprehended, and that peace be maintained.

I am now a private citizen, and, as such, I am at liberty to give expression to my private feelings towards you personally.

In all my official intercourse with you, though often overruled, I have been treated with uniform kindness and consideration.

I know your patriotism, your honesty and purity of character, and admire your high qualities of head and heart. If we can sink all the circumstances attending this unfortunate order for reinforcements—on which, though we may differ, yet I am willing to admit that you are as conscientious, as I claim to be—you have been frank, direct, and confiding in me. I have never been subjected to the first mortification, or entertained for a moment the first unkind feeling. These facts determined me to stand by you and your administration as long as there was any hope left that our present difficulties could find a peaceful solution. If the counsels of some members of your cabinet prevail, I am utterly without hope.

Every duty you have imposed on me has been discharged with scrupulous fidelity on my part, and it would give me infinite pain even to suspect that you are not satisfied.

Whatever may be our respective futures, I shall ever be your personal friend, and shall vindicate your fame and administration, of which I have been a part, and shall ever remember with gratitude the many favors and kindnesses heretofore shown to me and mine.

I go hence to make the destiny of Mississippi my destiny. My life, fortune, and all I hold most dear shall be devoted to her cause. In doing this, I believe before God, I am serving the ends of truth and justice and good government. Now, as ever, your personal friend,

J. THOMPSON.

[THE PRESIDENT TO MR. THOMPSON.]

WASHINGTON, January 11, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Without referring to any recent political question, your favor of yesterday has afforded me the highest degree of satisfaction. You know that for many years I have entertained a warm regard for you, and this has been greatly increased by our official and personal intercourse since you became a member of my cabinet. No man could have more ably, honestly, and efficiently performed the various and complicated duties of the Interior Department than yourself, and it has always been my pride and pleasure to express this opinion on all suitable occasions. I regret extremely that the troubles of the times have rendered it necessary for us to part; but whatever may be your future destiny, I shall ever feel a deep interest in your welfare and happiness.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[SECRETARY THOMAS TO THE PRESIDENT.]

WASHINGTON, D. C., January 11, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

It has not been in my power, as you are aware, to agree with you and with a majority of your constitutional advisers, in the measures which have been adopted in reference to the present condition of things in South Carolina; nor do I think it at all probable that I shall be able to concur in the views which you entertain, so far as I understand them, touching the authority under existing laws, to enforce the collection of the customs at the port of Charleston.

Under such circumstances, after mature consideration, I have concluded that I cannot longer continue in your cabinet without embarrassment to you, and an exposure of myself to the just criticisms of those who are acquainted with my opinions upon the subject. I, therefore, deem it proper to tender my resignation of the commission I now hold as Secretary of the Treasury, to

take effect when my successor is appointed and qualified. In doing so, I avail myself of the occasion to offer you the assurance of the high respect and regard which, personally, I entertain for you, and with which I have the honor to be,

Your friend and obedient servant,

PHILIP F. THOMAS.

[THE PRESIDENT TO MR. THOMAS.]

WASHINGTON, January 12, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your letter of yesterday, resigning the office of Secretary of the Treasury, to take effect when your successor shall be appointed and qualified.

I very much regret that circumstances, in your opinion, have rendered it necessary. Without referring to those circumstances, I am happy to state, in accepting your resignation, that during the brief period you have held this important office, you have performed its duties in a manner altogether satisfactory to myself.

Wishing you health, prosperity, and happiness, I remain,

Very respectfully, your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

## CHAPTER XX.

1860—December.

THE RESIGNATION OF SECRETARY FLOYD, AND ITS CAUSE—REFUTATION  
OF THE STORY OF HIS STEALING THE ARMS OF THE UNITED STATES  
—GENERAL SCOTT'S ASSERTIONS DISPROVED.

AMONG the assertions made by the South Carolina commissioners in their letter to the President of December 28th, there was one to which it is now specially necessary to advert. "Since our arrival," they said, "an officer of the United States, acting, as we are assured, not only without, but against your orders, has dismantled one fort and occupied another, thus altering to a most important extent the condition of affairs under which we came." The person who assured them that Anderson had acted without and against the President's orders, was Mr. Floyd, the Secretary of War, who had instructed Buell what orders to give to Anderson, and who knew well what the orders were. This brings me, therefore, to the point at which Mr. Floyd's conversion took place, from an avowed and consistent opponent of secession to one of its most strenuous supporters:—a conversion which was so sudden, that between the 23d of December and the arrival of the South Carolina commissioners, on the 26th, the Secretary boldly assumed a position entirely at variance with all his previous conduct, and thereafter became an intimate associate with disunion Senators, who had always, to this point, condemned his official conduct. The cause of this remarkable change was the discovery, by the President, of an act implicating Mr. Floyd in a very irregular proceeding, which had no connection whatever with the relations between the Federal Government and the State of South Carolina, or with the subject of secession.

On the 22d of December, the President learned that 870 State



bonds for \$1,000 each, held in trust by the Government for different Indian tribes, had been abstracted from the Interior Department by one Godard Bailey, the clerk who had charge of them, and had been delivered to William H. Russell, a member of the firm of "Russell, Majors & Waddell." Upon examination, it was found that the clerk had substituted for the abstracted bonds bills delivered to him by Russell, drawn by his firm on Floyd as Secretary of War, and by Floyd accepted and indorsed, for the precise amount of the bonds, \$870,000. The acceptances were thirteen in number, commencing on the 13th of September, 1860, the last one of the series, dated December 13th, 1860, being for the precise sum necessary to make the aggregate amount of the whole number of bills exactly equal to the amount of the abstracted bonds. Bailey stated that he held the acceptances "as collateral security for the return of the bonds."

What happened on this discovery should be told in Mr. Buchanan's own words, as I find them in his handwriting, in a paper drawn up apparently for the information of some one who was entitled to know the facts.

I do not recollect the precise time when I had the only conversation which I ever held with Governor Floyd on the subject of your inquiry. It was most probably soon after Mr. Benjamin had the interview with myself, the particulars of which I cannot now recall; but it is proper to state that I learned from another source that acceptances of Mr. Floyd had been offered for discount in Wall Street.

When I next saw Secretary Floyd I asked him if it were true that he had been issuing acceptances to Russell & Company on bills payable at a future day. He said he had done so in a few cases. That he had done this in no instance until after he had ascertained that the amount of the bills would be due to them under their contract, before the bills reached maturity; that the trains had started on their way to Utah, and there could be no possible loss to the Government. That the Government at that time was largely indebted to Russell & Company, and the bills which he had accepted would be paid, when they became due, out of the appropriation for that purpose. I asked him, under what authority he had accepted these drafts. He said, this had been done under the practice of the Department. I said, I had never heard of such a practice, and if such a practice existed, I considered it altogether improper, and should be discontinued. I asked him if there was any law which authorized such acceptances. He said there was no law, he believed, for it, and no law against it. I replied, if there was no law for it, this was conclusive that

he had no such authority. He said, I need give myself no trouble about the matter. That the acceptances already issued should be promptly paid out of the money due to Russell & Company, and he would never accept another such draft. I might rest perfectly easy on the subject. I had not the least doubt that he would fulfill his promise in good faith. He never said another word to me upon the subject. I was, therefore, never more astonished than at the exposure which was made that he had accepted drafts to the amount of \$870,000, and that these were substituted in the safe at the Interior Department, as a substitute for the Indian bonds which had been purloined.

I took immediate measures to intimate to him, through a distinguished mutual friend, that he could no longer remain in the cabinet, and that he ought to resign. I expected his resignation hourly; but a few days after, he came into the cabinet with a bold front, and said he could remain in it no longer unless I would instantly recall Major Anderson and his forces from Fort Sumter.

There were, as Mr. Buchanan states, besides the acceptances lodged in the Interior Department, other acceptances of Floyd's, as Secretary of War, afloat in Wall Street. Of course, Mr. Floyd was aware of this; and having been told by the President that he must resign, he boldly determined to resign on a feigned issue, making for himself a bridge on which he could pass over to the secession side of the great national controversy.

The arrival of the South Carolina commissioners in Washington on the 26th December, afforded to the Secretary an opportunity to concoct his impudent pretext. It is impossible to suppose that he believed either that Anderson had acted without orders or against orders, or in violation of any pledge given by the President. The orders were, in one sense, his own; and as to any pledge, he could not have been ignorant of what really took place between the President and the South Carolina members of Congress on the 10th of December. When he instructed Major Buell in the orders that were to be given to Anderson, the Secretary was, in giving those orders, loyal to the Government whose officer he was, and his conduct in regard to the acceptances was unknown to the President. When the South Carolina commissioners arrived in Washington, he was a man whose resignation of office had been required of him by the President. He learned that the commissioners were about to complain that Anderson had violated a pledge. Taking time by the forelock, he entered a session of the cabinet on the

evening of the 27th, the next day after the arrival of the commissioners, and, in a discourteous and excited manner, read to the President and his colleagues a paper which, on the 29th, he embodied in a letter of resignation, that read as follows:

[SECRETARY FLOYD TO THE PRESIDENT.]

WAR DEPARTMENT, December 29th, 1860.

SIR:—

On the evening of the 27th instant, I read the following paper to you, in the presence of the cabinet:

“COUNCIL CHAMBER, EXECUTIVE MANSION, }  
“December 27th, 1860. }

“SIR:—

“It is evident now, from the action of the commander at Fort Moultrie, that the solemn pledges of this Government have been violated by Major Anderson. In my judgment, but one remedy is now left us by which to vindicate our honor and prevent civil war. It is in vain now to hope for confidence on the part of the people of South Carolina in any further pledges as to the action of the military. One remedy only is left, and that is to withdraw the garrison from the harbor of Charleston altogether. I hope the President will allow me to make that order at once. This order, in my judgment, can alone prevent bloodshed and civil war.

“JOHN B. FLOYD,  
“Secretary of War.

“TO THE PRESIDENT.”

I then considered the honor of the administration pledged to maintain the troops in the position they occupied; for such had been the assurances given to the gentlemen of South Carolina who had a right to speak for her. South Carolina, on the other hand, gave reciprocal pledges that no force should be brought by them against the troops or against the property of the United States. The sole object of both parties to these reciprocal pledges was to prevent collision and the effusion of blood, in the hope that some means might be found for a peaceful accommodation of the existing troubles, the two Houses of Congress having both raised committees looking to that object.

Thus affairs stood, until the action of Major Anderson, taken unfortunately while commissioners were on their way to this capitol on a peaceful mission, looking to the avoidance of bloodshed, has complicated matters in the existing manner. Our refusal, or even delay, to place affairs back as they stood under our agreement, invites collision, and must inevitably inaugurate civil war in our land. I can not consent to be the agent of such a calamity.

I deeply regret to feel myself under the necessity of tendering to you my resignation as Secretary of War, because I can no longer hold it, under my

convictions of patriotism, nor with honor, subjected as I am to the violation of solemn pledges and plighted faith.

With the highest personal regard, I am most truly yours,

JOHN B. FLOYD.

In a subsequent note to the President, Mr. Floyd offered to perform the duties of the War Department until his successor had been appointed. Without taking any notice of this offer, and with the contemptuous silence that could alone have followed such conduct, the President instantly accepted his resignation, and Postmaster General Holt was transferred to the War Department *ad interim*. Thus passed out of the service of the United States John B. Floyd, once, like his father, Governor of Virginia. He was a man fitted by nature, by education, and by position, for better things than such an ending of an official career. He was no secessionist from conviction, and until the discovery of his irregular acts in issuing acceptances of his Department, he never pretended to be. He seems to have been stung by a consciousness that his letter of resignation was in a bad tone. On the 30th of December he addressed to the President a letter of apology, which, so far as I know, remained unanswered.

[MR. FLOYD TO THE PRESIDENT.]

WASHINGTON, December 30th, 1860.

MY DEAR SIR :—

I understand from General Jefferson Davis that you regard my letter of resignation as offensive to you. I beg to assure you that I am deeply grieved by this intelligence. Nothing could have been further from my wish, and nothing more repugnant to my feelings. If there is any sentence or expression which you regard in that light, I will take sincere pleasure in changing it. The facts and the ideas alone were in my mind when I penned the letter, and I repeat that nothing could have been further from my intention than to wound your feelings. My friendship for you has been and is sincere and unselfish. I have never been called upon by an imperious sense of duty to perform any act which has given me so much pain, as to separate myself from your administration, and this feeling would be greatly aggravated by the belief that in this separation I had said anything which could give you pain or cause of offence.

I beg to assure you that I am very truly and sincerely your friend,

JOHN B. FLOYD.

But justice must be done to Mr. Floyd, badly as he conducted himself after the discovery of his irregular and unauthorized acceptances of drafts on his Department. The impression has long prevailed among the people of the North that the Confederate States did their fighting with cannon, rifles and muskets treacherously placed within their reach by Mr. Buchanan's Secretary of War. The common belief has been that Mr. Floyd had for a long time pursued a plan of his own for distributing the arms of the United States in the South, in anticipation of a disruption of the Union at no distant day. General Scott, in 1862, took up this charge in his public controversy with Mr. Buchanan, and endeavored to establish it. He signally failed. The General, in 1862, thought that he had discovered that the revolt of the Southern States had been planned a long time before the election of Mr. Lincoln, and that it was to be carried out in the event of "the election of any Northern man to the Presidency." It had become a sort of fashion, in 1862, in certain quarters, to believe, or to profess to believe, in the existence of this long standing plot. There never was a rational ground for such a belief. It is not true, as a matter of fact, that at any time before the nomination of Mr. Lincoln, there was any transfer of arms to places in the Southern States, to which any suspicion of an improper design ought to attach. It is not true that at any time after Mr. Lincoln's nomination and before his election, there was any transfer of arms whatever from the Northern arsenals of the United States into the Southern States. The political history of the country, prior to the nomination of Mr. Lincoln and prior to the Democratic Convention at Charleston, does not warrant the belief that any considerable section of the Southern people, or any of their prominent leaders, were looking forward to a Presidential election likely to be so conducted and so to terminate, as to produce among them the conviction that it would be unsafe for them to remain in the Union. Even after Mr. Lincoln's nomination, and after the division of the Democratic party into two factions, resulting in the nomination of two Democratic candidates (Breckinridge and Douglas), with a fourth candidate in the field, Mr. Bell, nominated by the "old line Whigs," it was not so morally certain that the Republican candidate would be

elected, as to give rise, before the election, to serious plots or preparations for breaking up the Union. Mr. Lincoln obtained but a majority of 57 electoral votes over all his competitors. It was the sectional character of his 180 electoral votes out of 303—the whole 180 being drawn from the non-slaveholding States—and the sectional character of the “platform” on which he was elected, and not the naked fact that he was a Northern man, that the secessionists of the cotton States were able to use as the lever by which to carry their States out of the Union. It is necessary to follow the precipitation of the revolt through the various steps by which it was accomplished, after the election of Mr. Lincoln, before one can reach a sound conclusion as to the causes and methods by which it was brought about. Whoever studies the votes in the secession conventions of the cotton States prior to the bombardment of Fort Sumter, will find that even in that region there was a strong Union party in all those States excepting South Carolina, which could not have been overborne and trampled down, by any other means than by the appeals to popular fears which the secessionists drew from the peculiar circumstances of the election. He will find reason to ask himself why it was that in these successive conventions, rapidly accomplished between December, 1860, and February, 1861, the Unionists were unable to prevail; and he will find the most important answer to this inquiry in the fact that it was because the advocates of secession were able, from the circumstances of the election, to produce the conviction that the whole North was alienated in feeling from the South, and determined to trample on Southern rights. It was this that worked upon a sensitive and excited people. It was not the accomplishment of a long meditated plot to destroy the Union.

But if there ever was such a plot, there is not the slightest ground for believing that Secretary Floyd, or any other member of Mr. Buchanan’s cabinet, was a party to it. It was, however, in 1862, one of the means resorted to in order to make the Buchanan administration odious, that this charge was made against the Secretary of War; and when it was adopted by General Scott, it was supposed that his authority had given weight to it. He saw fit to put it in his public controversy with Mr. Buchanan in the following form: That Secretary

Floyd "removed 115,000 extra muskets and rifles, with all their implements and ammunition, from Northern repositories to Southern arsenals, so that on the breaking out of the maturing rebellion, they might be found without cost, except to the United States, in the most convenient positions for distribution among the insurgents. So, too, of the one hundred and forty pieces of heavy artillery, which the same Secretary ordered from Pittsburgh to Ship Island in Lake Borgne and Galveston in Texas, for forts not erected. Accidentally learning, early in March, that, under this posthumous order the shipment of those guns had commenced, I communicated the fact to Secretary Holt (acting for Secretary Cameron) just in time to defeat the robbery."\*

The anachronisms of this assertion, when it met the eye of Mr. Buchanan in November, 1862, and its apparent ignorance of the facts, may well have amazed him. The whole subject had undergone a thorough investigation by a committee of the House of Representatives in the winter of 1860-61, in consequence of the rumors which had been sent afloat after the resignation of Secretary Floyd. The new Secretary of War, Mr. Holt, not waiting for the exercise of the power conferred on the committee to send for persons and papers, threw open all the records of the Ordnance Bureau. The resolution ordering the investigation was adopted on the 31st of December, 1860, and the committee were authorized to report in preference to all other business. It appeared that there were two Acts of Congress under which Secretary Floyd had proceeded. One was an Act of March 3d, 1825, authorizing the Secretary of War to sell any arms, ammunition, or other military stores, which, upon proper inspection, should be found unfit for the public service. The other was a long standing act for arming the militia of the States, by distributing to them their respective quotas of arms. Whatever was done under either of these laws was necessarily done by the officers and attachés of the Ordnance Bureau. Nothing could have been done clandestinely, or without being made a matter of record. At the head of the Ordnance Bureau was Colonel Craig, one of the most loyal and faithful of the

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\* General Scott's letter of November 8, 1862, published in the *National Intelligencer*.

many loyal and faithful officers of the army. Under him was Captain (afterwards General) Maynadier, as chivalrously true an officer as the United States ever had. Without the knowledge of these officers, the Secretary of War could not have sold or removed a musket. The investigations of the Congressional committee embraced four principal heads: 1st. What arms had been sold? 2d. What arms had been distributed to the States? 3d. What arms had been sent for storage in Southern arsenals of the United States? 4th. What ordnance had been transferred from Northern arsenals of the United States to Southern forts?

1. Under the first of these inquiries the committee ascertained and reported that, in the spring of 1859, 50,000 muskets, part of a lot of 190,000, condemned by the inspecting officers "as unsuitable for the public service," were offered for sale. They reported the bids and contracts, some of which were and some were not carried out. The result of actual sales and deliveries left many of them in the hands of the Government. In speaking of these muskets generally, Colonel Craig testified before the committee that it was always advisable to get rid of them whenever there was a sufficient number of the new rifled muskets to take their places, the old ones not being strong enough to be rifled. In the spring of 1859, therefore, a year before the nomination of Mr. Lincoln, as Mr. Buchanan has well said, if the cotton States were then meditating a rebellion, they lost an opportunity to buy a lot of poor arms condemned by the inspecting officers of the United States.\* The only Southern State that made a bid was Louisiana, which purchased 5000 of these condemned muskets, and finally took but 2500. One lot was bid for by an agent of the Sardinian government, who afterwards refused to take them on some dispute about the price which he had offered.

2. In regard to arms distributed to the States and Territories since January 1st, 1860, the committee ascertained and reported that the whole number of muskets distributed among all the States, North and South, was 8423. These were army muskets of the best quality; but neither of the States of Arkansas,

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\* Buchanan's Defence, p. 228.



Delaware, Kentucky, North Carolina, or Texas, received any of them, because they neglected to ask for the quotas to which they were entitled. The other Southern and Southwestern States, which did apply for their quotas, received 2091 of these army muskets, or less than one-fourth. Of long range rifles of the army calibre, all the States received, in 1860, 1728. Six of the Southern and Southwestern States, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia, received in the aggregate 758 of these long range rifles, and the two other Southern States received none. The eight Southern States received in the aggregate a less number of muskets and rifles than would be required to properly equip two full regiments.

3. In relation to arms transferred to the Southern arsenals of the United States, the committee ascertained that on the 29th of December, 1859, nearly eleven months before the election of Mr. Lincoln, and several months before his nomination, the Secretary of War ordered Colonel Craig to remove one-fifth of the old flint-lock and percussion muskets from the Springfield armory in Massachusetts, where they had accumulated in inconvenient numbers, to five Southern arsenals of the United States, for storage. The order and all the proceedings under it were duly recorded. No haste was resorted to: the arms were to be removed "from time to time, as may be most suitable for economy and transportation," and to be placed in the different arsenals "in proportion to their respective means of proper storage." This order was carried out by the Ordnance Bureau in the usual course of administration, without reference to the President. Of these muskets, entirely inferior to the new rifled musket of the United States army, 105,000 were transferred to the Southern arsenals under this order. There were also transferred under the same order, 10,000 of the old percussion rifles, of an inferior calibre to the new rifled muskets then used by the army. These constituted the 105,000 "extra muskets and rifles" which General Scott asserted, in 1862, had been sent into the South to arm the insurgents, who, he supposed, were just ready to commence the civil war eleven months before Mr. Lincoln's election. Colonel Maynadier, in a letter which he addressed to a Congressional committee on the

3d of February, 1862, said of this order of December 29th, 1859, that it never occurred to him that it could have any improper motive, for Mr. Floyd was "then regarded throughout the country as a strong advocate of the Union and an opponent of secession, and had recently published a letter in a Richmond paper which gained him high credit in the North for his boldness in rebuking the pernicious views of many in his own State." It should be added that no ammunition whatever was embraced in the order, and none accompanied the muskets.

4. On the subject of heavy ordnance ordered by Secretary Floyd to be sent from Pittsburgh to two forts of the United States then erecting in the South, the committee found and reported the following facts: On the 20th of December, 1860, nine days before his resignation, Secretary Floyd, without the knowledge of the President, gave to Captain Maynadier a verbal order to send to the forts on Ship Island and at Galveston the heavy guns necessary for their armament. Proceeding to carry out this order, Captain Maynadier, on the 22d of December, sent his written orders to the commanding officer of the Alleghany arsenal at Pittsburgh, directing him to send 113 "Columbiads" and 11 32-pounders to the two Southern forts. When these orders reached Pittsburgh, they caused a great excitement in that city. A committee of the citizens, whose letter to the President lies before me, dated December 25th, brought the matter to his personal attention, and advised that the orders be countermanded. The guns had not been shipped. Four days after this letter was written, Secretary Floyd was out of office. Mr. Holt, the new Secretary, by direction of the President, immediately rescinded the order. The city councils of Pittsburgh, on the 4th of January, 1861, sent a vote of thanks for this prompt proceeding, to the President, in which they included the new Attorney General, Mr. Stanton, and the new Secretary of War, Mr. Holt.

With this transaction General Scott had nothing whatever to do. Yet, in 1862, he at first thought that he discovered, early in March, 1861, something that happened in the December and January previous, and that he interfered just in time "to defeat the robbery!" It will be noticed that the General claimed to have given this information to Secretary Holt while he was

acting for Secretary Cameron; that is, in March, after the close of Mr. Buchanan's administration, and before Mr. Cameron, Mr. Lincoln's Secretary of War, had taken possession of the Department. So that the inference naturally was that Mr. Buchanan had allowed his administration to expire, leaving this "posthumous order" of Secretary Floyd in force after Mr. Lincoln's accession, and that but for General Scott's interposition it would have been carried out; although the whole affair was ended before the 4th day of January, on information received from the citizens of Pittsburgh and promptly acted upon by President Buchanan and Secretary Holt, without any interference whatever by General Scott!\*

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\* When this extraordinary blunder was brought to the General's attention, in his controversy with Mr. Buchanan, in 1862, he said that the only error he had made was in giving March instead of January as the time when the order was countermanded, and that this error was immaterial! He still insisted that he gave the information to Mr. Holt that the shipment had commenced, and that he stopped it. It is certainly most remarkable that he did not see that time was of the essence of his charge against the Buchanan administration, for his charge imputed to that administration a delay from January to March in countermanding the order, and claimed for himself the whole merit of the discovery and the countermand. He would better have consulted his own dignity and character if he had frankly retracted the whole statement. But probably the story of the Pittsburgh ordnance, as he put it, has been believed by thousands, to the prejudice of President Buchanan. (See the letters of General Scott, published in the *National Intelligencer*.)

## CHAPTER XXI.

November, 1860—March, 1861.

THE ACTION OF CONGRESS ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL MESSAGE—THE "CRITTENDEN COMPROMISE"—STRANGE COURSE OF THE NEW YORK "TRIBUNE"—SPECIAL MESSAGE OF JANUARY 8, 1861.

IT is now necessary to turn to what took place in Congress upon the recommendations of the President's annual message. There were but two courses that Congress could pursue in this most extraordinary emergency. It must either preserve the Union by peaceful measures, or it must provide the President and his successor with the military force requisite to secure the execution of the laws and the supremacy of the Constitution. It was plain that in this, as in all similar cases of threatened revolt against the authority of a regular and long established government, mere inaction would be a fatal policy. After the State of South Carolina should have adopted an ordinance of secession, it would be too late to accomplish anything by merely arguing against the constitutional doctrine on which the asserted right of secession depended. That right was firmly held by multitudes of men in other States, and unless the Government of the United States should, by conciliatory measures, effectually disarm the disposition to exercise it, or effectually prepare to enforce the authority of the Constitution after secession had taken place, it was morally certain that the next two or three months would witness the formation of a Southern Confederacy of formidable strength. To the Executive Department it appropriately belonged to suggest the measures of conciliation needful for one of the alternatives of a sound and safe policy, and to execute the laws by all the means with which the Executive was then or might thereafter be clothed by the legislature. But the

Executive could not in the smallest degree increase the means which existing laws had placed in his hands.

There was all the more reason for prompt action upon the President's pacific recommendations, in the fact that the Government of the United States was wholly unprepared for a civil war. The nature of such a war, the character of the issue on which it would have to be waged, and the natural repugnance of the people of both sections to have such a calamity befall the country, all tended to enhance the duty of preventing it by timely concessions which would in no way impair the authority of the Constitution. It is true that potentially the Government had great resources in its war making power, its taxing power, and its control over the militia of the States. But inasmuch as a sudden resort to its ultimate powers, and to their plenary exercise was at this moment fraught with the greatest peril, there can be no question that the duty of conciliation stood first in the rank of moral and patriotic duties incumbent upon the representatives of the States and the people in the two houses of Congress. Next in the relative rank of these duties, to be performed, however, simultaneously with the first of them, stood the obligation to strengthen the hands of the Executive for the execution of the laws and the preservation of the public property in South Carolina, which was manifestly about to assume the attitude of an independent and foreign State. Whether either of these great duties was performed by the Congress, to which President Buchanan addressed his annual message and his subsequent appeals; what were the causes which produced a failure to meet the exigency; on whom rests the responsibility for that failure, and what were the consequences which it entailed, must now be considered. Mr. Buchanan has said that this Congress, beyond question, had it in its power to preserve the peace of the country and the integrity of the Union, and that it failed in this duty.\* Is this a righteous judgment, which history ought to affirm?

In the Senate, after the reading of the President's message, so much as related to the present agitated and distracted condition of the country and the grievances between the slaveholding

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\* Buchanan's Defence, chapter vii.

and the non-slaveholding States, was referred to a select committee of thirteen members. The composition of this committee was most remarkable. It consisted of five Republicans: Senators Seward, Collamer, Wade, Doolittle, and Grimes, all of them from non-slaveholding States, and all prominent adherents of that "Chicago platform" on which Mr. Lincoln had been elected; five members from slaveholding States, Senators Powell, Hunter, Crittenden, Toombs, and Davis, and three "Northern Democrats," Senators Douglas, Bigler, and Bright. It was understood that the three last named Senators were placed upon the committee to act as mediators between the Northern and the Southern sections which the ten other members represented. Under ordinary circumstances, a committee would have shaped its report by the decisions of a majority of its members, if they could not be unanimous. But at the first meeting of this committee, on the 21st of December, the day after that on which South Carolina passed her ordinance of secession, an extraordinary resolution was adopted, that no proposition should be reported as the decision of the committee, unless sustained by a majority of each of the classes comprising the committee, and it was defined that the Senators of the Republican party were to constitute one class, and Senators of the other parties were to constitute the other class. Thus, while there were eight members of the committee who might, by concurring in any proposition, ordinarily determine the action of the body, it could not become the decision of that body unless it was supported by the votes of a separate majority of the five Republican members. It was said that the reason for this restriction was that no report would be adopted by the Senate, unless it had been concurred in by at least a majority of the five Republican Senators. Valid or invalid as this reason may have been, the restriction is a remarkable proof of the sectional attitude of the Northern Senators, of the responsibility which they assumed, and of the willingness of the majority of the Southern Senators to have the Republican members of the committee exercise such a power and bear such a responsibility. The sequel will show how a committee thus composed and thus tied down was likely to act.

On the 22d, Mr. Crittenden, of Kentucky, a Senator whose

name will be forever venerated for the patriotic part which he took throughout the proceedings of this Congress, submitted to the committee a "Joint Resolution," which he had already offered in the Senate, and which became known as "the Crittenden Compromise." It proposed certain amendments of the Constitution which would reconcile the conflicting claims of the North and the South, by yielding to the South the right to take slaves into the Territories south of the parallel of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ , and excluding slavery from all the Territories north of that line: with the further provision that when any Territory north or south of that line, within such boundaries as Congress might prescribe, should contain a population requisite for a member of Congress, it should be admitted into the Union as a State with or without slavery, as the State constitution adopted by the people might provide. When it is considered that the people of the slaveholding States claimed that the Supreme Court of the United States had already decided that slaves might be taken as property into any Territory and be there held as property, under a constitutional right resulting from the common ownership of the Territories by the States composing the Union, the "Crittenden Compromise," if accepted, would be a sacrifice by the South with which the North might well be content. Whatever were the technical reasons which could be alleged to show that the Supreme Court had not made a determination of this question that was binding as a judicial decision, it was nevertheless true that a majority of the judges had affirmed in their several opinions the claim of every Southern slaveholder to carry his slaves into the Territories of the United States and to hold them there as property, until the formation of a State constitution. President Buchanan always regarded the case of "Dred Scott" as a judicial decision of this constitutional question. But whether it was so or not, the claim had long been asserted and was still asserted by the people of the Southern States; and if it was still open as a judicial question, as the Republican party contended, and if it could be resisted as a political claim by one section of the Union, it was equally open to the other section to treat it as a political controversy, which required to be disposed of by mutual concession between the slaveholding and the non-slaveholding States. The

Republican party, confined exclusively to the non-slaveholding States, had, by their political platform in the late Presidential election, treated the action of the Supreme Court as a nullity, and had affirmed as a cardinal doctrine of their political creed that slavery should forever be excluded, by positive law, from all the Territories of the United States. The circumstances under which the Democratic party came into the political field in that election did not show that this party universally took the opposite side; but the votes of the Southern States in the election show most clearly that the people of those States still asserted the claim which they held to have been affirmed by the highest judicial tribunal in the country.

If, therefore, the Crittenden Compromise should be accepted by the South, it could not be denied that the South would sacrifice a claim which her people were practically unanimous in asserting as a right.\* On the other hand, what would the North lose by that compromise? It would lose nothing but an abstraction; for there was no Territory south of  $36^{\circ} 30'$  but New Mexico, and into that Territory slave labor could never be profitably introduced, on account of the nature of the country.\* While, therefore, the North would by this compromise yield nothing but a useless abstract concession to the South, and would gain, in fact, all the vast territory north of the compromise line as free territory forever, the Republican party would undoubtedly have to sacrifice the dogma of the "Chicago platform." Whether that dogma ought to have been held paramount to every other consideration, is a question on which posterity will have to pass.

It was not yet too late to make this peace-offering to the South. Mr. Crittenden's proposition was offered to the committee before any of the Government forts in the Southern States had been seized, when no State excepting South Carolina had "seceded," and when no convention of the six other cotton States had assembled. Well might Mr. Buchanan say that the moment was propitious. Well might the patriotic Crittenden say, in addressing his colleagues on the committee: "The sacrifice to be made for its preservation (the Union) is comparatively worthless. Peace and harmony and union in a great nation

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\* All the remaining territory south of the line of  $36^{\circ} 30'$  was an Indian reservation, secured to certain tribes by solemn treaties.



were never purchased at so cheap a rate as we now have it in our power to do. It is a scruple only, a scruple of as little value as a barleycorn, that stands between us and peace, and reconciliation, and union; and we stand here pausing and hesitating about that little atom which is to be sacrificed."

But this admirable and unselfish statesman was then to learn that there are states of men's minds and characters when, fixed by the antecedents and committals of party, eloquence does not convince, facts are powerless; when the "barleycorn" becomes a great and important object; when mole hills become mountains, and when fear of constituents dominates over all other fears. Yet it cannot be doubted that there was really very little reason to fear that the constituencies of Northern Senators would hold them to a strict account for voting in favor of the Crittenden Compromise. Public feeling almost everywhere hailed it as the promise of peace and of the perpetuity of the Union. Nevertheless, all the five Republican members of the committee voted against it. This secured its rejection, under the resolution that had been adopted by the committee. But the singular fact is to be added that two Senators from the cotton States, Messrs. Davis, of Mississippi, and Toombs, of Georgia, also voted in the same way.

Readers will look in vain through Mr. Jefferson Davis's recent work for a satisfactory explanation of this vote. But an explanation may perhaps be found in his whole course from the beginning of the session to his withdrawal from the Senate in the month of January, 1861, after the State of Mississippi had seceded. No impartial person can, it seems to me, read Mr. Davis's own account of his public conduct at this crisis, without reaching the conclusion that whatever aid he may at any time have been disposed to render in the pacification of the country was at all times neutralized by his attitude in regard to the right of secession. From first to last he insisted that South Carolina, after she had adopted an ordinance of secession, should be regarded by the Government of the United States as an independent power. He was active in promoting the objects for which her commissioners came to Washington in the last week of December. He demanded that the troops of the United States should be withdrawn from the forts in Charleston harbor;

that those forts should be surrendered to the paramount sovereignty of a State now become a foreign nation ; and he scouted and ridiculed the idea that the Federal Executive could employ a military force in executing the laws of the United States within the dominion of a State which had withdrawn the powers that she had formerly deposited with the General Government. There was something singularly preposterous in this demand that a great government, which had subsisted for more than seventy years, and had always executed its laws against all combinations of an insurrectionary character, whether created by individuals or by State authority, should now "thaw and resolve itself into a dew," before the all-consuming energy of a State ordinance ; should accept the secession theory of the Constitution as the unquestionable law of the land, at the peril of encountering a civil war. How could measures of conciliation and concession be of any value, though tendered by the Federal Government, if that Government was in the same breath to admit that it had no constitutional power to enforce its authority if the offer of conciliation and concession should be rejected ? Yet Mr. Davis's ground of quarrel with President Buchanan was that he would not admit the right of secession. He could not either persuade or drive the President into that admission ; and surely there can be no stronger proof of the integrity, fidelity and firmness of the President than this one fact affords.

Mr. Davis takes credit to himself and other Southern Senators for having intervened to prevent the authorities of South Carolina from making any attack upon the forts, so that a civil war might not be precipitated while measures for the settlement of the sectional difficulties were pending. No one need deny that those Senators are entitled to all the credit that justly belongs to such efforts. But why were those efforts made, and by what were they all along accompanied ? They were made in order that there might be no bloodshed brought about, which would cause the other cotton States to recoil from the support of South Carolina in her assertion of the right of secession ; and they were always accompanied by the demand that the Federal Government should permit the peaceable secession of any State, even to the extent of refraining from enforcing its laws and from holding its property within the dominions of any State

that should choose to secede. This idea of peaceable secession, and all that it comprehended, was founded on the wild expectation that the two classes of States, slaveholding and non-slaveholding, after an experimental trial of separate confederacies, would find some system of union, some basis of reconstruction, other than the basis of the Constitution of the United States. Whatever claims of statesmanship may belong to those who entertained this chimerical project, they could hardly press it upon others as a reason for treating the Constitution of the United States as a system of government confessedly destitute of any authority or power to execute its own laws or to retain its own existence. But this is just what Mr. Davis denounced President Buchanan for not admitting; and he therefore, to the extent of his influence, counteracted the President's great object of isolating the State of South Carolina by measures that would quiet the agitation in other slaveholding States, and at the same time would prepare the necessary means for executing the laws of the United States within the limits of that one State, in case she should adopt an ordinance of secession.

On the other hand, the Republican Senators on the Committee of Thirteen who voted against the Crittenden Compromise had no such policy to actuate them as that which governed Mr. Davis. They had no reason for refusing their aid to the President that could be founded on any difference of opinion as to the constitutional duty of the Executive. They knew that he was asking for means to uphold the authority of the Constitution in South Carolina, at the same time that he was urging measures which would prevent other States from joining her in the secession movement. What explanation of their conduct is possible and will leave to them the acquittal of patriotic purposes, I am not aware. But the fact is, that at no time during the session did a single Republican Senator, in any form whatever, give his vote or his influence for the Crittenden Compromise, or for any other measure that would strengthen the hands of the President either in maintaining peace or in executing the laws of the United States. Whether the spirit of party led them to refuse all aid to an outgoing President; whether they did not believe that there would be any necessity for a resort to arms; whether they did not choose, from sectional animosity,

to abate anything from the "Chicago platform;" whatever was the governing motive for their inaction, it never can be said that they were not seasonably warned by the President that a policy of inaction would be fatal. That policy not only crippled him, but it crippled his successor. When Mr. Lincoln came into office, seven States had already seceded, and not a single law had been put upon the statute book which would enable the Executive to meet such a condition of the Union.

Not only is it manifest that the Crittenden proposition was reasonable and proper in itself, but there is high authority for saying that it ought to have been embraced by every Republican Senator. While it was pending before the Committee of Thirteen, General Duff Green, a prominent citizen of Mississippi, visited Mr. Lincoln, the President-elect, at his home in Springfield, Illinois. Mr. Green took with him a copy of Mr. Crittenden's resolutions, and asked Mr. Lincoln's opinion of them. The substance of what Mr. Lincoln said was reported on the 28th of December to President Buchanan, in the following note:

[GENERAL DUFF GREEN TO PRESIDENT BUCHANAN.]

SPRINGFIELD, ILL., December 28, 1860.

DEAR SIR:—

I have had a long and interesting conversation with Mr. Lincoln. I brought with me a copy of the resolutions submitted by Mr. Crittenden, which he read over several times, and said that he believed that the adoption of the line proposed would quiet, for the present, the agitation of the slavery question, but believed it would be renewed by the seizure and attempted annexation of Mexico. He said that the real question at issue between the North and the South was slavery "propagandism," and that upon that issue the Republican party was opposed to the South, and that he was with his own party; that he had been elected by that party, and intended to sustain his party in good faith; but added, that the question on the amendments to the Constitution and the questions submitted by Mr. Crittenden belonged to the people and States in legislatures or conventions, and that he would be inclined not only to acquiesce, but to give full force and effect to their will thus expressed. Seeing that he was embarrassed by his sense of duty to his party, I suggested that he might so frame a letter to me as to refer the measures for the preservation of the Union to the action of the people in the several States, and he promised to prepare a letter, giving me his views, by 9 A.M. to-morrow. If his letter be satisfactory, its purport will be communicated to you by telegraph.

Yours truly,

DUFF GREEN.

I know of no evidence that Mr. Lincoln prepared the letter which he promised. No account of it appears to have reached Mr. Buchanan by telegraph or otherwise. It is probable that Mr. Lincoln, feeling more strongly the embarrassment arising from his party relations, reconsidered his determination, and excused himself to General Green. But what his opinion was is sufficiently proved by the note which General Green dispatched from Springfield, and which must have reached Mr. Buchanan at about the time when the committee of thirteen made their report to the Senate that they were unable to agree upon any general plan of adjustment of the sectional difficulties. This report was made on the 31st of December.

The last ten days of the year were thus suffered to elapse without anything being done to arrest the rising tide of secession in the seven cotton States. Most of these States had suspended or delayed their action until it could be known whether there was to be any concession made by the Republican party as represented in Congress. They now rapidly accomplished their secession measures. The conventions of Florida on the 7th of January, Mississippi on the 9th, Alabama on the 11th, Georgia on the 19th, Louisiana on the 25th, and Texas on the 5th of February, adopted ordinances of secession by great majorities. These ordinances were followed by a general seizure of the public property of the United States within the limits of those States, after the example of South Carolina.

Among the discouraging influences which now operated with a double mischief to counteract the efforts of those who aimed to confine secession to the State of South Carolina, must be mentioned the course of one of the most prominent papers of the North. No journal had exercised a greater power in promoting the election of Mr. Lincoln upon the "Chicago platform" than the *New York Tribune*. It was universally and justly regarded as a representative of a large section of the Republican party. Its founder and chief editor, Horace Greeley, was a man of singular mould. Beginning life as a journeyman printer, he learned in the practice of type-setting the compass and power of the English language. In the course of a long experience as a public writer, he acquired a style of much energy, and of singular directness. But, without a regular education and the mental discipline which it

gives, he never learned to take a comprehensive and statesman-like view of public questions. His impulses, feelings, and sympathies were on the side of humanity and the progress of mankind. But these generous and noble qualities were unbalanced by a sense of the restraints which the fundamental political conditions of the American Union imposed upon philanthropic action. He was, therefore, almost incapable of appreciating the moral foundations on which the Union was laid by the Constitution of the United States. He felt deeply the inherent wrong of African slavery, but he could not see, or did not care to see, that the Union of slaveholding and non-slaveholding States under one system of government for national purposes was caused by public necessities that justified its original formation, and that continued to make its preservation the highest of civil obligations. He did not, like many of the anti-slavery agitators, renounce the whole of the Constitution. But while he was willing that the North should enjoy its benefits, he was ever ready to assail those provisions, however deeply they were embedded in the basis of the Union, which recognized and to a qualified extent upheld the slavery existing under the local law of certain States. When, therefore, the long political conflict between the two sections of the country culminated in a condition of things which presented the alternatives of a peaceful separation of the slave and the free States, or a denial of the doctrine of secession and the consequences claimed for it, Mr. Greeley threw his personal weight, and the weight of his widely circulated journal, against the authority of the General Government to enforce in any way the obligations of the Constitution. He did not much concern himself with the distinction between coercing a State by force of arms from adopting an ordinance of secession, and coercing individuals after secession to obey the laws of the United States. From the period immediately before the election of Mr. Lincoln, after his election, and for a time after his inauguration, Mr. Greeley opposed all coercion of every kind. He maintained that the right of secession was the same as the right of revolution; and after the cotton States had formed their confederacy and adopted a provisional constitution, he tendered the aid of his journal to forward their views. He thus, on the one hand, joined his influence to the cry of the

professed abolitionists who renounced the Constitution entirely, and on the other hand, contributed his powerful pen in encouraging the secessionists to persevere in separating their States from the Union.

Mr. Greeley's secession argument, drawn from the Declaration of Independence and the right of revolution, was a remarkable proof of the unsoundness of his reasoning powers. Because the right of self-government is an inherent right of a people, he assumed that men cannot be required to perform their covenanted obligations. He could not see, he said, how twenty millions of people could rightfully hold ten, or even five, other millions in a political union which those other millions wished to renounce. But if he had ever been in the habit of reasoning upon the Constitution of the United States as other men reasoned, who did not accept the doctrine of State secession, he could have seen that when five millions of people, exercising freely the right of self-government, have solemnly covenanted with the twenty millions that they will obey the laws enacted by a legislative authority which they have voluntarily established over themselves and over all the inhabitants of the country, the moralist and the publicist can rest the right to use compulsion upon a basis which is perfectly consistent with the principles of the Declaration of Independence, and which those principles do in truth recognize.

In fact, however, Mr. Greeley, by his public utterances at this great crisis, bettered the instructions of the secessionists themselves. He taught them that the Crittenden Compromise, or any other measure of conciliation, need not be considered. They had only to will that they would leave the Union, and they were out of it, and at liberty to care nothing about concessions from the North. And in the same way, he taught those of the North, on whom rested the immediate duty of preventing the spread of the secession movement, that all measures of conciliation were useless, for the right of secession, as he maintained, was bottomed on the Declaration of Independence, and neither persuasion nor coercion ought to be used against the exercise of such a right. Such political philosophy as this, proclaimed by a leading organ of the Republican party, created difficulties for a President situated as Mr. Buchanan

was after the election of his successor, which posterity can not overlook.\*

Seeing how fatally wrong was the course of this erratic journalist, and how much depended on the success of the Crittenden Compromise, the President endeavored to enlist in its behalf another great journal of the North, which was conducted by a person on whom he thought he could rely, and whose paper was professedly independent of party politics. The following private letter to the editor of the New York *Herald* attests how earnestly Mr. Buchanan was bent upon the improvement of every chance by which the spread of secession might be prevented:

\* Mr. Greeley's utterances must be cited, that I may not be supposed to have in any way misrepresented him. But three days after Mr. Lincoln's election, the New York *Tribune* announced such sentiments as the following: "If the cotton States shall become satisfied that they can do better out of the Union than in it, we insist on letting them go in peace. *The right to secede may be a revolutionary one, BUT IT EXISTS NEVERTHELESS.* . . . . We must ever resist the right of any State to remain in the Union and nullify or defy the laws thereof. To WITHDRAW FROM THE UNION IS QUITE ANOTHER MATTER; and whenever a considerable section of our Union shall deliberately resolve to go out, WE SHALL RESIST ALL COERCIVE MEASURES DESIGNED TO KEEP IT IN. We hope never to live in a Republic whereof one section is pinned to another by bayonets."

And again on the 17th December, three days before the secession of South Carolina: "If it [the Declaration of Independence] justified the secession from the British Empire of three millions of colonists in 1776, *we do not see why it would not justify the secession of five millions of Southrons from the Federal Union in 1861.* If we are mistaken on this point, why does not some one attempt to show *wherein* and why? For our part, while we deny the right of slaveholders to hold slaves against the will of the latter, *we cannot see how twenty millions of people can rightfully hold ten, or even five, in a detested Union with them by military force.* . . . . *If seven or eight contiguous States shall present themselves authentically at Washington,* saying, 'We hate the Federal Union; we have withdrawn from it; we give you the choice between acquiescing in our secession and arranging amicably all incidental questions on the one hand, and attempting to subdue us on the other,' *we would not stand up for coercion, for subjugation, for we do not think it would be just.* We hold the right of self-government, *even when invoked in behalf of those who deny it to others.* So much for the question of principle.

In this course the *Tribune* persisted from the date of Mr. Lincoln's election until after his inauguration, employing such remarks as the following: "Any attempt to compel them by force to remain would be contrary to the principles enunciated in the immortal Declaration of Independence, contrary to the fundamental ideas on which human liberty is based."

Even after the cotton States had formed their confederacy, and adopted a provisional constitution at Montgomery, on the 23d February, 1861, it gave them encouragement to proceed in the following language: "*We have repeatedly said, and we once more insist, that the great principle embodied by Jefferson in the Declaration of American Independence, that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, is sound and just; and that if the slave States, the cotton States or the Gulf States only, choose to form an independent nation, THEY HAVE A CLEAR MORAL RIGHT TO DO SO. Whenever it shall be clear that the great body of Southern people have become conclusively alienated from the Union, and anxious to escape from it, WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO FORWARD THEIR VIEWS.*"



[MR. BUCHANAN TO JAMES GORDON BENNETT.]

(Private and confidential.)

WASHINGTON, December 20, 1860.

MY DEAR SIR:—

You wield the most powerful organ in the country for the formation of public opinion, and I have no doubt you feel a proportionate responsibility under the present alarming circumstances of the country. Every person here has his own remedy for existing evils, and there is no general assent to any proposition. Still, I believe the tendency is strong, and is becoming stronger every day, towards the Missouri Compromise, with the same protection to slaves south of 36° 30' that is given to other property. The South can lose no territory north of this line, because no portion of it is adapted to slave labor, whilst they would gain a substantial security within the Union by such a constitutional amendment. The Republicans have for some years manifested indignation at the repeal of this compromise, and would probably be more willing to accept it than any other measure to guarantee the rights of the South. I have stated my favorite plan in the message, but am willing to abandon it at any moment for one more practicable and equally efficacious. If your judgment should approve it, you could do much by concentrating and directing your energies to this single point. My object, when I commenced to write, was simply to express my opinion that existing circumstances tended strongly toward the Missouri Compromise; but, with pen in hand, I shall make one or two other remarks.

I do not know whether the great commercial and social advantages of the telegraph are not counterbalanced by its political evils. No one can judge of this so well as myself. The public mind throughout the interior is kept in a constant state of excitement by what are called "telegrams." They are short and spicy, and can easily be inserted in the country newspapers. In the city journals they can be contradicted the next day; but the case is different throughout the country. Many of them are sheer falsehoods, and especially those concerning myself. . . .

With my kindest and most cordial regards to Mrs. Bennett, I remain, very respectfully, your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

Although defeated before the Committee of Thirteen, Mr. Crittenden did not abandon the cause of peace and Union. His proposed compromise, it was now apparent, could not be carried as an amendment of the Constitution by the requisite two-thirds vote of Congress. But an appeal could be made to the people, if a majority of both Houses would send the question to them; and if this majority could be obtained in time, he and others had good reason to believe that the course of secession in the six remaining cotton States could be stayed. He therefore postponed by his own motion the further consideration of his pro-

posed amendment, and on the 3d of January, 1861, before any State excepting South Carolina had seceded, he introduced a substitute for it, in the shape of a joint resolution, by which he proposed to refer his compromise to a direct vote of the people in the several States, so that they could instruct their representatives to give it the initiatory shape of a constitutional amendment. This course of action was not provided for in the amending clause of the Constitution, and it was, without doubt, extraordinary. But there was nothing in the Constitution inconsistent with it; it would not set aside any of the forms by which amendments of the Constitution must be initiated and adopted; and the circumstances of the country were so extraordinary that any means of reaching public opinion would be entirely proper. Moreover, it was not an unprecedented step, for State legislatures and other public bodies had frequently recommended various amendments of the Constitution. Mr. Crittenden's resolution justified itself by its own terms. It read as follows :

"Whereas, the Union is in danger, and, owing to the unhappy divisions existing in Congress, it would be difficult, if not impossible, for that body to concur in both its branches by the requisite majority, so as to enable it either to adopt such measures of legislation, or to recommend to the States such amendments to the Constitution, as are deemed necessary and proper to avert that danger; and, whereas, in so great an emergency, the opinion and judgment of the people ought to be heard, and would be the best and surest guide to their representatives: Therefore, *Resolved*, That provision ought to be made by law, without delay, for taking the sense of the people and submitting to their vote the following resolution [the same as in his former amendment], as the basis for the final and permanent settlement of those disputes that now disturb the peace of the country and threaten the existence of the Union."

The President now interposed the weight of his office, by a special message to Congress, dated on the 8th of January. What had occurred between him and the South Carolina commissioners has been detailed. Of this occurrence, and of the position of affairs in Charleston harbor, Congress was now officially informed by the special message; the residue of it was devoted to the expediency and necessity of allowing the people to express their sentiments concerning the proposition of Mr. Crittenden.

## TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

At the opening of your present session I called your attention to the dangers which threatened the existence of the Union. I expressed my opinion freely concerning the original causes of those dangers, and recommended such measures as I believed would have the effect of tranquilizing the country and saving it from the peril in which it had been needlessly and most unfortunately involved. Those opinions and recommendations I do not propose now to repeat. My own convictions upon the whole subject remain unchanged.

The fact that a great calamity was impending over the nation was even at that time acknowledged by every intelligent citizen. It had already made itself felt throughout the length and breadth of the land. The necessary consequences of the alarm thus produced were most deplorable. The imports fell off with a rapidity never known before, except in time of war, in the history of our foreign commerce; the Treasury was unexpectedly left without the means which it had reasonably counted upon to meet the public engagements; trade was paralyzed; manufactures were stopped; the best public securities suddenly sunk in the market; every species of property depreciated more or less; and thousands of poor men, who depended upon their daily labor for their daily bread, were turned out of employment.

I deeply regret that I am not able to give you any information upon the state of the Union which is more satisfactory than what I was then obliged to communicate. On the contrary, matters are still worse at present than they then were. When Congress met, a strong hope pervaded the whole public mind that some amicable adjustment of the subject would speedily be made by the representatives of the States and of the people, which might restore peace between the conflicting sections of the country. That hope has been diminished by every hour of delay; and as the prospect of a bloodless settlement fades away, the public distress becomes more and more aggravated. As evidence of this, it is only necessary to say that the Treasury notes authorized by the act of 17th December last were advertised, according to the law, and that no responsible bidder offered to take any considerable sum at par at a lower rate of interest than twelve per cent. From these facts it appears that, in a government organized like ours, domestic strife, or even a well-grounded fear of civil hostilities, is more destructive to our public and private interests than the most formidable foreign war.

In my annual message I expressed the conviction, which I have long deliberately held, and which recent reflection has only tended to deepen and confirm, that no State has a right by its own act to secede from the Union, or throw off its Federal obligations at pleasure. I also declared my opinion to be that, even if that right existed and should be exercised by any State of the Confederacy, the Executive Department of this Government had no authority under the Constitution to recognize its validity by acknowledging the independence of such State. This left me no alternative, as the Chief Executive officer under the Constitution of the United States, but to collect the public revenues and to protect the public property so far as this might be practicable

under existing laws. This is still my purpose. My province is to execute, and not to make the laws. It belongs to Congress, exclusively, to repeal, to modify, or to enlarge their provisions, to meet exigencies as they may occur. I possess no dispensing power.

I certainly had no right to make aggressive war upon any State, and I am perfectly satisfied that the Constitution has wisely withheld that power even from Congress. But the right and the duty to use military force defensively against those who resist the Federal officers in the execution of their legal functions, and against those who assail the property of the Federal Government, is clear and undeniable.

But the dangerous and hostile attitude of the States toward each other has already far transcended and cast in the shade the ordinary executive duties already provided for by law, and has assumed such vast and alarming proportions as to place the subject entirely above and beyond executive control. The fact cannot be disguised that we are in the midst of a great revolution. In all its various bearings, therefore, I commend the question to Congress, as the only human tribunal, under Providence, possessing the power to meet the existing emergency. To them, exclusively, belongs the power to declare war, or to authorize the employment of military force in all cases contemplated by the Constitution; and they alone possess the power to remove grievances which might lead to war, and to secure peace and union to this distracted country. On them, and on them alone, rests the responsibility.

The Union is a sacred trust left by our revolutionary fathers to their descendants; and never did any other people inherit so rich a legacy. It has rendered us prosperous in peace and triumphant in war. The national flag has floated in glory over every sea. Under its shadow American citizens have found protection and respect in all lands beneath the sun. If we descend to considerations of purely material interest, when, in the history of all time, has a confederacy been bound together by such strong ties of mutual interest? Each portion of it is dependent on all, and all upon each portion, for prosperity and domestic security. Free trade throughout the whole supplies the wants of one portion from the productions of another, and scatters wealth everywhere. The great planting and farming States require the aid of the commercial and navigating States to send their productions to domestic and foreign markets, and to furnish the naval power to render their transportation secure against all hostile attacks.

Should the Union perish in the midst of the present excitement, we have already had a sad foretaste of the universal suffering which would result from its destruction. The calamity would be severe in every portion of the Union, and would be quite as great, to say the least, in the Southern as in the Northern States. The greatest aggravation of the evil, and that which would place us in the most unfavorable light both before the world and posterity, is, as I am firmly convinced, that the secession movement has been chiefly based upon a misapprehension at the South of the sentiments of the majority in several of the Northern States. Let the question be transferred from political

assemblies to the ballot-box, and the people themselves would speedily redress the serious grievances which the South have suffered. But, in Heaven's name, let the trial be made before we plunge into armed conflict upon the mere assumption that there is no other alternative. Time is a great conservative power. Let us pause at this momentous point and afford the people, both North and South, an opportunity for reflection. Would that South Carolina had been convinced of this truth before her precipitate action! I, therefore, appeal through you to the people of this country to declare in their might that the Union must and shall be preserved by all constitutional means. I most earnestly recommend that you devote yourselves exclusively to the question how this can be accomplished in peace. All other questions, when compared with this, sink into insignificance. The present is no time for palliatives; action, prompt action, is required. A delay in Congress to prescribe or to recommend a distinct and practical proposition for conciliation may drive us to a point from which it will be almost impossible to recede.

A common ground on which conciliation and harmony can be produced is not unattainable. The proposition to compromise by letting the North have exclusive control of the territory above a certain line, and to give Southern institutions protection below that line, ought to receive universal approbation. In itself, indeed, it may not be entirely satisfactory; but when the alternative is between a reasonable concession on both sides and a destruction of the Union, it is an imputation upon the patriotism of Congress to assert that its members will hesitate for a moment.

Even now the danger is upon us. In several of the States which have not yet seceded, the forts, arsenals, and magazines of the United States have been seized. This is by far the most serious step which has been taken since the commencement of the troubles. This public property has long been left without garrisons and troops for its protection, because no person doubted its security under the flag of the country in any State of the Union. Besides, our small army has scarcely been sufficient to guard our remote frontiers against Indian incursions. The seizure of this property, from all appearances, has been purely aggressive, and not in resistance to any attempt to coerce a State or States to remain in the Union.

At the beginning of these unhappy troubles, I determined that no act of mine should increase the excitement in either section of the country. If the political conflict were to end in a civil war, it was my determined purpose not to commence it, nor even to furnish an excuse for it by an act of this Government. My opinion remains unchanged, that justice as well as sound policy requires us still to seek a peaceful solution of the questions at issue between the North and the South. Entertaining this conviction, I refrained even from sending reinforcements to Major Anderson, who commanded the forts in Charleston harbor, until an absolute necessity for doing so should make itself apparent, lest it might unjustly be regarded as a menace of military coercion, and thus furnish, if not a provocation, a pretext for an outbreak on the part of South Carolina. No necessity for these reinforcements seemed to exist. I

was assured by distinguished and upright gentlemen of South Carolina\* that no attack upon Major Anderson was intended, but that, on the contrary, it was the desire of the State authorities, as much as it was my own, to avoid the fatal consequences which must eventually follow a military collision.

And here I deem it proper to submit, for your information, copies of a communication, dated December 28, 1860, addressed to me by R. W. Barnwell, J. H. Adams, and J. L. Orr, "commissioners" from South Carolina, with the accompanying documents, and copies of my answer thereto, dated December 31.

In further explanation of Major Anderson's removal from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter, it is proper to state that, after my answer to the South Carolina "commissioners," the War Department received a letter from that gallant officer, dated December 27, 1860, the day after this movement, from which the following is an extract:

"I will add, as my opinion, that many things convinced me that the authorities of the State designed to proceed to a hostile act" [evidently referring to the orders dated December 11, of the late Secretary of War]. "Under this impression, I could not hesitate that it was my solemn duty to move my command from a fort which we could not probably have held longer than forty-eight or sixty hours to this one, where my power of resistance is increased to a very great degree." It will be recollected that the concluding part of these orders was in the following terms: "The smallness of your force will not permit you, perhaps, to occupy more than one of the three forts; but an attack on, or attempt to take possession of either one of them, will be regarded as an act of hostility, and you may then put your command into either of them which you may deem most proper to increase its power of resistance. You are also authorized to take similar defensive steps whenever you have tangible evidence of a design to proceed to a hostile act."

It is said that serious apprehensions are, to some extent, entertained, in which I do not share, that the peace of this District may be disturbed before the 4th of March next. In any event, it will be my duty to preserve it, and this duty shall be performed.

In conclusion, it may be permitted to me to remark that I have often warned my countrymen of the dangers which now surround us. This may be the last time I shall refer to the subject officially. I feel that my duty has been faithfully, though it may be imperfectly, performed; and whatever the result may be, I shall carry to my grave the consciousness that I at least meant well for my country.

JAMES BUCHANAN.

WASHINGTON CITY, Jan. 8, 1861.

It is a painful part of an historian's duty to reflect upon the conduct of public men, who had it in their power at least to

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\* Messrs. McQueen, Miles, Bonham, Boyce, and Keitt, members of the House of Representatives from South Carolina, on the 8th of December, 1860.

show a willingness to save their country from the calamity of civil war, and who appear to have been indifferent to everything but the dogmas of a party platform. This special message of President Buchanan, in the circumstances of the moment, was entitled to the gravest attention and respect. It ought to have produced immediate assent to its recommendation, on the part of Republican Senators, whom it would have relieved from their previous committals to the "Chicago platform" by a reference of the questions in dispute to the people of the country. The venerable age of the President, his long experience in public affairs, his unquestionable patriotism, his approaching retirement from public life, his manifest desire to leave the Government to his successor unembarrassed by anything but the secession of South Carolina, should have conciliated the support of some at least, if not of all, of the Republican Senators. But, as it is now my melancholy duty to show from the record, not one Republican Senator ever voted for Mr. Crittenden's resolution, the adoption of which the President so strongly recommended. Memorials of the most earnest character, coming from all quarters of the North, even from New England, urging the passage of the Crittenden Compromise, were heaped upon the table of the Senate.\* On the 14th of January, Mr. Crittenden made an unsuccessful effort to have his resolution considered. It was postponed to the following day. On the 15th, every Republican Senator voted for its further postponement, to make room for the Pacific Railroad Bill. On the 16th, Mr. Crittenden obtained, by a majority of one vote—all the Republican Senators voting nay—the consideration of his resolution. Parliamentary tactics were then resorted to by the Republicans to defeat it. Mr. Clark, a Republican Senator from New Hampshire, moved to strike out the whole preamble and body of the resolution, and to substitute in its place another preamble and resolution of an entirely opposite character, and affirming the dogma of the Chicago platform in relation to slavery in the Territories. For this motion there were 25 yeas to 23 nays; all the Republican

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\* See the Index to the Journal of the Senate for this session, pp. 494, 495, 496. One of these memorials, coming from the City Councils of Boston, had the signatures also of over 22,000 citizens, of all shades of political character. Senate Journal of 1860-'61, p. 218.

Senators voting in the affirmative.\* Buried under the Clark amendment, Mr. Crittenden's resolution remained for more than six weeks, until the 2d of March, when it was too late for final action upon it. But on that day a vote was taken upon it, and it was defeated by 19 votes in the affirmative and 20 in the negative.†

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\* The Clark amendment, which smothered Mr. Crittenden's resolution, prevailed, because six secession Senators refused to vote against it, preferring to play into the hands of the Republicans. They were Messrs. Benjamin and Slidell, of Louisiana; Iverson, of Georgia; Hemphill and Wigfall, of Texas, and Johnson, of Arkansas. Had they voted with the Senators from the border States and the other Democratic members, the Clark amendment would have been defeated, and the Senate would on that day, before the secession of any State excepting South Carolina, have been brought to a direct vote on Mr. Crittenden's resolution.

† "It is proper," Mr. Buchanan said, "for future reference that the names of those Senators who constituted the majority on this momentous question, should be placed upon record. Every vote given from the six New England States was in opposition to Mr. Crittenden's resolution. These consisted of Mr. Clark, of New Hampshire; Messrs. Sumner and Wilson, of Massachusetts; Mr. Anthony, of Rhode Island; Messrs. Dixon and Foster, of Connecticut; Mr. Foot, of Vermont; and Messrs. Fessenden and Morrill, of Maine. The remaining eleven votes, in order to make up the 20, were given by Mr. Wade, of Ohio; Mr. Trumbull, of Illinois; Messrs. Bingham and Chandler, of Michigan; Messrs. Grimes and Harlan, of Iowa; Messrs. Doolittle and Durkee, of Wisconsin; Mr. Wilkinson, of Minnesota; Mr. King, of New York; and Mr. Ten Eyck, of New Jersey. It is also worthy of observation, that neither Mr. Hale, of New Hampshire, Mr. Simmons, of Rhode Island, Mr. Collamer, of Vermont, Mr. Seward, of New York, nor Mr. Cameron, of Pennsylvania, voted on the question, although it appears from the journal that all these gentlemen were present in the Senate on the day of the vote. It would be vain to conjecture the reasons why these five Senators refrained from voting on an occasion so important. (Buchanan's Defence, p. 143.)



## CHAPTER XXII.

1861—January, February, and March.

THE "PEACE CONVENTION"—FORT SUMTER—THE STAR OF THE WEST FIRED UPON IN CHARLESTON HARBOR—ANDERSON'S TEMPORARY TRUCE—THE HARBOR OF PENSACOLA AND FORT PICKENS—THE COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN EX-PRESIDENT TYLER AND PRESIDENT BUCHANAN.

THE vote of the Senate on the 16th of January, by which Mr. Crittenden's resolution was defeated by the tactics of the Republicans, aided by six of the Southern Senators, made it apparent that some extraordinary interposition could alone save the Union. For such interposition there was still time, if it could be promptly exerted, and Congress could be induced to listen to it. It came from the State of Virginia, and as Mr. Buchanan has given a succinct and accurate account of this movement, which resulted in the assembling at Washington of the body called "The Peace Convention," I transcribe it into these pages :

These great and powerful commonwealths [the border States] still remained faithful to the Union. They had hitherto stood aloof from secession, and had manifested an earnest desire not only to remain in the Union themselves, but to exert their powerful influence to bring back the seceding sisters. Virginia had ever ranked as chief among the Southern States, and had exercised great influence over their counsels. She had now taken the lead in the grand design to save the Union, and it became the duty of the President to render her all the aid in his power in a cause so holy. Every reflecting man foresaw that if the present movement of Virginia should fail to impress upon Congress and the country the necessity for adopting a peaceful compromise, like that proposed by Mr. Crittenden, there was imminent danger that all the border slave States would follow the cotton States, which had already adopted ordinances of secession, and unite with them in an attempt to break up the Union. Indeed, as has been already seen, the Virginia legislature had declared that, in case of failure, such a dissolution was "inevitable."

The Peace Convention met on the 4th February.\* It was composed of one hundred and thirty-three commissioners, representing twenty-one States. A bare inspection of the list will convince all inquirers of the great respectability and just influence of its members. Among them there were many venerable and distinguished citizens from the border States, earnestly intent upon restoring and saving the Union. Their great object was to prevail upon their associates from the North to unite with them in such recommendations to Congress as would prevent their own States from seceding, and enable them to bring back the cotton States which had already seceded. It will be recollected that on the 4th February, when the Peace Convention assembled, six of the cotton States, South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, Louisiana, and Florida, had already adopted ordinances of secession; and that but four days thereafter (8th February) deputies from these States had adopted and published at Montgomery, Alabama, a Provisional Constitution for the so-called Confederate States. The Union was then crumbling to pieces. One month only of the session of Congress remained. Within this brief period it was necessary that the Convention should recommend amendments to the Constitution in sufficient time to enable both Houses to act upon them before their final adjournment. It was also essential to success that these amendments should be sustained by a decided majority of the commissioners both from the Northern and the border States. It was, however, soon discovered that the same malign influence which had caused every Republican member of Congress to oppose the Crittenden Compromise, would probably defeat the patriotic purpose for which the Convention had assembled.

On Wednesday, the 6th February, a resolution was adopted,† on motion of Mr. Guthrie, of Kentucky, to refer the resolutions of the General Assembly of Virginia, and all other kindred subjects, to a committee to consist of one commissioner from each State, to be selected by the respective State delegations; and to prevent delay they were instructed to report on or before the Friday following (the 8th), "what they may deem right, necessary, and proper to restore harmony and preserve the Union."

This committee, instead of reporting on the day appointed, did not report until Friday, the 15th February,‡ and thus a precious week was lost. . . .

The amendments reported by a majority of the committee, through Mr. Guthrie, their chairman, were substantially the same with the Crittenden Compromise; but on motion of Mr. Johnson, of Maryland, the general terms of the first and by far the most important section were restricted to the *present* Territories of the United States.¶ On motion of Mr. Franklin, of Pennsylvania, this section was further amended, but not materially changed, by the adoption of the substitute offered by him. Nearly in this form it was afterwards adopted by the Convention.§ The following is a copy: "In all the present Territory of the United States north of the parallel of thirty-six

\* *Cong. Globe*, 1860-61, p. 125.

† Official Journal of the Convention, pp. 9 and 10.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¶ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

degrees and thirty minutes of north latitude, involuntary servitude, except in punishment of crime, is prohibited. In all the present Territory south of that line, the status of persons held to involuntary service or labor, as it now exists, shall not be changed; nor shall any law be passed by Congress or the Territorial legislature to hinder or prevent the taking of such persons from any of the States of this Union to said Territory, nor to impair the rights arising from said relation; but the same shall be subject to judicial cognizance in the Federal courts, according to the course of the common law. When any Territory north or south of said line, within such boundary as Congress may prescribe, shall contain a population equal to that required for a member of Congress, it shall, if its form of government be republican, be admitted into the Union on an equal footing with the original States, with or without involuntary servitude, as the Constitution of such State may provide."

Mr. Baldwin, of Connecticut, and Mr. Seddon, of Virginia, on opposite extremes, made minority reports, which they proposed to substitute for that of the majority. Mr. Baldwin's report was a recommendation "to the several States to unite with Kentucky in her application to Congress to call a convention for proposing amendments to the Constitution of the United States, to be submitted to the legislatures of the several States, or to conventions therein, for ratification, as the one or the other mode of ratification may be proposed by Congress, in accordance with the provisions in the fifth article of the Constitution."\*

Of the two modes prescribed by the Constitution for its own amendment, this was the least eligible at the existing crisis, because by far the most dilatory. Instead of calling upon Congress, then in session and which could act immediately, to propose specific amendments to the legislatures of the several States, it adopted the circuitous mode of requesting these legislatures, in the first instance, to apply to Congress to call a convention. Even should two-thirds of them respond in the affirmative to this request, the process would necessarily occasion a delay of years in attaining the object, when days were all-important. This would entirely defeat the patriotic purpose of the Peace Convention. It was called to obtain, if possible, a direct vote of two-thirds of both Houses before the end of the session in favor of such amendments as it might recommend. Could such a vote be obtained, it was confidently expected by the friends of the Union that its moral influence would, for the present, satisfy the border States; would arrest the tide beginning to rise among their people in favor of secession, and might enable them to exercise an effective influence in reclaiming the States which had already seceded. Affairs were then so urgent that long before the State legislatures could possibly ask Congress to call a convention as required by Mr. Baldwin's proposition, the cause of the Union might be hopeless. It was, therefore, rejected.

This proposition of Mr. Baldwin, evasive and dilatory as it was, nevertheless received the votes of eight of the twenty-one States.† These consisted

\* Official Journal, pp. 24 and 25.

† Ibid., p. 63.

of the whole of the New England States, except Rhode Island, and of Illinois, Iowa and New York, all being free States. This was an evil omen.

The first amendment reported by Mr. Seddon differed from that of the majority, inasmuch as it embraced not only the present but all future Territories.\* This was rejected.† His second amendment, which, however, was never voted upon by the Convention, went so far as distinctly to recognize the right of secession.

It cannot be denied that there was in the convention an extreme Southern rights element, headed by Mr. Seddon. This manifested itself throughout its proceedings. These show how naturally extremes meet. On more than one important occasion, we find the vote of Virginia and North Carolina, though given in each case by a bare majority of their commissioners, side by side with the vote of Massachusetts and Vermont. It would be too tedious to trace the proceedings of the Convention from the report of the committee made by Mr. Guthrie until its final adjournment. It is sufficient to say that more than ten days were consumed in discussion and in voting upon various propositions offered by individual commissioners. The final vote was not reached until Tuesday, the 26th February, when it was taken on the first and vitally important section, as amended.‡

This section, on which all the rest depended, was negatived by a vote of eight States to eleven. Those which voted in its favor were Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Tennessee. And those in the negative were Connecticut, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, New Hampshire, Vermont and Virginia. It is but justice to say that Messrs. Ruffin and Morehead, of North Carolina, and Messrs. Rives and Summers, of Virginia, two of the five commissioners from each of these States, declared their dissent from the vote of their respective States. So, also, did Messrs. Bronson, Corning, Dodge, Wool and Granger, five of the eleven New York commissioners, dissent from the vote of their State. On the other hand, Messrs. Meredith and Wilmot, two of the seven commissioners from Pennsylvania, dissented from the majority in voting in favor of the section. Thus would the Convention have terminated but for the interposition of Illinois. Immediately after the section had been negatived, the commissioners from that State made a motion to reconsider the vote, and this prevailed. The Convention afterwards adjourned until the next morning. When they reassembled (February 27), the first section was adopted, but only by a majority of nine to eight States, nine being less than a majority of the States represented. This change was effected by a change of the vote of Illinois from the negative to the affirmative, by Missouri withholding her vote, and by a tie in the New York commissioners, on account of the absence of one of their number, rendering it impossible for the State to vote. Still, Virginia and North Carolina, in the one extreme, and Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont, in the

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\* Official Journal, pp. 26, 27 and 28.

† Ibid., p. 23.

‡ Ibid., p. 70.

other, persisted in voting in the negative. From the nature of this vote, it was manifestly impossible that two-thirds of both Houses of Congress should act favorably on the amendment, even if the delay had not already rendered such action impracticable before the close of the session.

It would be useless to refer to the voting on the remaining sections of the amendment, which were carried by small majorities.\* The Convention, on the same day, through Mr. Tyler, their president, communicated to the Senate and House of Representatives the amendment they had adopted, embracing all the sections, with a request that it might be submitted by Congress, under the Constitution, to the several State legislatures. In the Senate this was immediately referred to a select committee, on motion of Mr. Crittenden. The committee, on the next day (28th Feb.),† reported a joint resolution (No. 70) proposing it as an amendment to the Constitution, but he was never able to bring the Senate to a direct vote upon it.‡ Failing in this, he made a motion to substitute the amendment of the Peace Convention for his own.§ This he prefaced by declaring that he looked upon the result of the deliberations of that body "as affording the best opportunity for a general concurrence among the States, and among the people." He, therefore, "had determined to take it in preference to his own proposition, and had so stated to many of the members of the Convention." He further said that he had "examined the propositions offered by that Convention; they contain, in my judgment, every material provision that is contained in the resolution called the Crittenden Resolution." He also had adopted this course "out of deference to that great body of men selected on the resolution of Virginia, and invited by Virginia herself. The body having met, and being composed of such men, and a majority of that Convention concurring in these resolutions, I think they come to us with a sanction entitling them to consideration." Mr. Crittenden's reasons failed to convince the Senate, and his motion was rejected by a large majority (28 to 7).¶ Then next in succession came the memorable vote on Mr. Crittenden's own resolution, and it was in its turn defeated, as we have already stated, by a majority of 20 against 19.

We cannot take leave of this venerable patriot, who so wisely appreciated the existing danger, without paying a just tribute to the vigor and perseverance of his repeated efforts to ward off from his country the direful calamity of disunion and civil war. Well did he merit the almost unanimous vote of the Virginia Convention, on the 11th March, tendering him the thanks of the people of Virginia for "his recent able, zealous, and patriotic efforts in the Senate in the United States, to bring about a just and honorable adjustment of our national difficulties."⌘ This vote, we may remark, was far from being complimentary to the conduct of a majority of their own commissioners (Messrs. Tyler, Brockenbrough, and Seddon) in the Peace Convention.

In the House of Representatives, the amendment proposed by the Conven-

\* Senate Journal, pp. 332, 333.

§ *Cong. Globe*, 1860-'61, p. 1404.

¶ *National Intelligencer*, March 14, 1861.

† *Ibid.*, p. 437.

‡ Senate Journal, p. 336.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 334.

tion was treated with still less respect than it had been by the Senate.\* The Speaker was refused leave even to present it.† Every effort made for this purpose was successfully resisted by leading Republican members. The consequence is that a copy of it does not even appear in the Journal.

Although the amendment was somewhat less favorable to the South, and ought, therefore, to have been more acceptable to the North than the Crittenden amendment, yet, like this, it encountered the opposition of every Republican member in both Houses of Congress. Nevertheless, it presented a basis of compromise which, had it been conceded by the North, might and probably would, have been accepted by the people of the border States, in preference to the fearful alternative of their secession from the Union.

However urgent were the reasons for the adoption by Congress of the Crittenden Compromise, or the propositions submitted to it by the Peace Convention, the question now recurs whether the President in the meantime did his duty and his whole duty, in keeping a vigilant eye upon the proceedings in South Carolina and other Southern States. To answer this question, it is necessary to go back to the point of time at which the first commissioners from South Carolina left Washington without having obtained from the President a promise to withdraw Major Anderson's force from the harbor of Charleston, or any stipulation not to send him reinforcements. This point of time is the 2d day of January, 1861, the day on which the commissioners dated their reply to the President's letter of December 31st; a reply couched in terms so disrespectful and arrogant that by the unanimous advice of the cabinet it was returned to them as a paper unfit to be received. "From that time forward," says Mr. Buchanan, "all friendly political and personal intercourse finally ceased between the revolutionary Senators and the President, and he was severely attacked by them in the Senate, and especially by Mr. Jefferson Davis. Indeed, their intercourse had been of the coldest character ever since the President's anti-secession message at the commencement of the session of Congress."‡

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\* *Cong. Globe*, pp. 1331, 1332, 1333.

† *House Journal*, pp. 446, 448, 449.

‡ Letter of October 23, 1862, in the controversy with General Scott, published in the *National Intelligencer* of November 1, 1862. As a specimen of the intercourse between the President and the secession Senators, after the messages of December 3d and January 8th, take the following notes:—

The first event occurring at this time in the Executive Department, which it is important to notice here, was an application made by General Scott to the President, on Sunday, the 30th of December, by the following note :

December 30, 1860.

Lieutenant General Scott begs the President of the United States to pardon the irregularity of this communication. It is Sunday, the weather is bad, and General Scott is not well enough to go to church. But matters of the highest national importance seem to forbid a moment's delay, and, if misled by zeal, he hopes for the President's forgiveness.

Will the President permit General Scott, without reference to the War Department, and otherwise as secretly as possible, to send two hundred and fifty recruits, from New York harbor, to reinforce Fort Sumter, together with some extra muskets or rifles, ammunition, and subsistence stores ?

It is hoped that a sloop-of-war and cutter may be ordered for the same purpose as early as to-morrow.

General Scott will wait upon the President at any moment he may be called for.

The President's most obedient servant,

WINFIELD SCOTT.

General Scott was evidently not aware, when he wrote this note, that the late Secretary of War, Floyd, was out of office. The President, having substituted Mr. Holt in his place as Secretary *ad interim*, was under no necessity whatever to act without the knowledge of that Department. He proceeded therefore to act promptly and in the usual manner upon the General's recommendation. He received the General's note on the

[JOHN SLIDELL TO PRESIDENT BUCHANAN.]

MY DEAR SIR:—

WASHINGTON, January 27, 1861.

I have seen in the *Star*, and heard from other parties, that Major Beauregard, who had been ordered to West Point as Superintendent of the Military Academy, and had entered on the discharge of his duties there, had been relieved from his command. May I take the liberty of asking you if this has been done with your approbation ? Very respectfully, yours,

JOHN SLIDELL.

[PRESIDENT BUCHANAN TO JOHN SLIDELL.]

MY DEAR SIR:—

WASHINGTON, January 29, 1861.

With every sentiment of personal friendship and regard, I am obliged to say, in answer to your note of Sunday, that I have full confidence in the Secretary of War; and his acts, in the line of his duty, are my own acts, for which I am responsible.

Yours, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

evening of Sunday, the 30th of December. On the morning of Monday, the 31st, he gave instructions to the War and Navy Departments; the orders were issued on that day; and in the evening General Scott called upon the President and informed him that the Secretaries had issued the orders and that they were in his (the General's) possession. The orders were that the sloop-of-war Brooklyn, with troops, military stores, and provisions, was to sail forthwith from Fortress Monroe to Fort Sumter. It could not be true, therefore, as was afterwards asserted by General Scott, that "the South Carolina commissioners had already been many days in Washington and no movement of defence (on the part of the United States) was permitted." The commissioners arrived in Washington on the 27th of December. On the 30th they received the President's answer. General Scott's request was made to the President on the 30th, and on the 31st the orders for the Brooklyn to sail were in his hands. The commissioners' insolent reply to the President was not delivered to him until the 2d of January. The Brooklyn was already under orders, but the orders were not despatched from Washington on the 31st for a reason that will presently appear.

It is now to be stated how a mercantile steamer, *The Star of the West*, came to be substituted for the Brooklyn, and to sail on this expedition. And here General Scott's memory was utterly at fault in 1862. He then publicly stated that the President refused to allow any attempt to be made to reinforce Fort Sumter, because he was holding negotiations with the South Carolina commissioners; and that "afterwards Secretary Holt and myself [General Scott] endeavored, in vain, to obtain a ship-of-war for the purpose, and were finally obliged to employ the passenger steamer *Star of the West*." It is most extraordinary that the General should have made this misstatement. The *Star of the West* was substituted for the Brooklyn by his own advice. "At the interview already referred to," says Mr. Buchanan, "between the General and myself, on the evening of Monday, the 31st of December, I suggested to him that, although I had not received the South Carolina commissioners in their official capacity, but merely as private gentlemen, yet it might be considered as an improper act to send the Brooklyn with reinforce-



ments to Fort Sumter until I had received an answer from them to my letter of the preceding day; that the delay could not continue more than forty-eight hours. He promptly concurred in this suggestion as gentlemanly and proper, and the orders were not transmitted to the Brooklyn on that evening. My anticipations were correct, for on the morning [afternoon] of the 2d of January I received their insolent note, and sent it back to them. In the meantime, however, the General had become convinced, on the representations of a gentleman whom I forbear to name, that the better plan, as the Secretaries of War and the Navy informed me, to secure secrecy and success, and reach the fort, would be to send a fast side-wheel steamer from New York with the reinforcement. Accordingly, the *Star of the West* was selected for this duty. The substitution of this steamer for the Brooklyn, which would have been able to defend herself in case of attack, was reluctantly yielded by me to the high military judgment of General Scott.”\*

In consequence of this change, a short time had to elapse before the *Star of the West*, then at New York, could take on board the reinforcements. She sailed from New York on the 5th of January. On that day General Scott sent a despatch to his son-in-law, Colonel Scott, to countermand her departure, but it was not received until after she had gone to sea. The countermand was given for two reasons: first, because a despatch received by Mr. Holt on that day from Major Anderson stated in effect that he felt secure in his position; and secondly, and more emphatically, because on the same evening information reached the War Department that a heavy battery had been erected among the sand hills, at the entrance of Charleston harbor, capable of destroying any unarmed vessel that might attempt to enter.† Satisfied that there was no present necessity for sending reinforcements, and that when sent they ought to go in a vessel of war, the Government, with General Scott’s full concurrence,‡ after learning that the countermand had not

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\* Letter from Mr. Buchanan to the *National Intelligencer*, October 28, 1862.

† See a statement published by Mr. Holt in the *National Intelligencer*, dated March 5, 1861.

‡ When General Scott wrote and published, in 1862, his criticisms on Mr. Buchanan’s course, he said that the *Star of the West*, “but for the hesitation of the master, might, as is generally believed, have delivered at the fort the men and subsistence on board.” He had forgotten that he had sent his own order to the commander of the troops on board that vessel, which would inform him that the Brooklyn was coming to aid and succor him, and that

reached the *Star of the West* before she sailed, took steps to overtake her. The following memorandum now lies before me :

MEMORANDUM FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE HON. SECRETARY OF WAR.

A despatch was forwarded, night of January 7, through the agency of the Navy Department, to the officer commanding recruits on board the steamship *Star of the West*, in almost exactly these words :

"This communication will be handed you by the Commander of the United States Steamer sloop-of-war *Brooklyn*.

"The object of his mission is twofold. *First*, to afford aid and succor in case your ship be shattered or injured; *second*, to convey this order of recall, in case you cannot land at Fort Sumter, to Fort Monroe, Hampton Roads, there to await further orders.

"In case of your return to Hampton Roads, send a telegraphic message here at once from Norfolk.

"WINFIELD SCOTT.

"P. S.—Land your troops at Fort Monroe and discharge the ship.

"W. S."

The *Star of the West* arrived off the harbor of Charleston on the 9th of January, and being fired upon as she was attempting to enter the harbor, by order of Governor Pickens, she returned without entering. It is, therefore, now necessary to go forward, and covering everything that was done or omitted by the President thereafter, in regard to Fort Sumter, to inquire into another charge made by General Scott in 1862, that the President was under the embarrassment of a truce or armistice, which continued for the remainder of the administration. It seems that late in the month of January, there was a project considered, between the General, Secretaries Holt and Toucey, and certain naval officers, with the knowledge of the President, for sending three or four small steamers belonging to the coast survey to the relief of Fort Sumter. General Scott, in 1862, declared that he had but little doubt this expedition would have been successful, but that it was "kept back by something like a truce or armistice, made here, embracing Charleston and

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in case he could not land at Fort Sumter, he was to turn back and land his troops at Fort Monroe and discharge the ship! With what propriety then could the General blame the master of the ship for not making an attempt which the General knew he could not make without the support of the *Brooklyn*?

Pensacola harbors, agreed upon by the late President and certain principal seceders of South Carolina, Florida, Louisiana, etc., and this truce lasted to the end of that administration."

It is perhaps not remarkable that the history of this period of Mr. Buchanan's administration should have been so widely misunderstood, when one considers the nature of the materials from which the history thus far written has been derived. General Scott, from his official position, knew that no truce or armistice whatever was entered into by the President with anybody, embracing the two harbors of Charleston and Pensacola; that in regard to Pensacola, there was a special arrangement, in no way connected with the state of things in Charleston; and that in regard to Charleston, there was only a temporary agreement between Major Anderson and Governor Pickens, that was terminable on a certain event, and that lasted but for a short time. To separate things entirely distinct in their nature, but which General Scott saw fit to blend together in making his imputations upon the President's conduct, is now my imperative duty.

The only truce that was made in reference to Charleston was an actual truce of arms made between Governor Pickens and Major Anderson, on the 11th of January, 1861, without the President's previous knowledge, and consequently it could not have been the result of any conference between the President and certain secessionists then in Washington or elsewhere. The *Star of the West*, sailing under the American flag, was fired upon and turned back on the 9th of January. This outrage required Major Anderson's instant notice. If he had immediately opened fire from Fort Sumter upon the adjacent batteries which sent their shot across the bow of that vessel, he would have been justified by his position as an officer of the United States commanding a fort which existed for the protection of all vessels having a right to enter the harbor, and especially for the protection of all vessels bearing the flag of the United States. He was under no obligation whatever to recognize South Carolina as a power foreign to the United States; but if he had chosen, he might have considered the firing on this vessel as an act of war, which South Carolina had instituted against the United States. He took what he considered as the most prudent course that was open to him. He sent a flag of truce to the

Governor, stating that he presumed the act was unauthorized, and therefore that he had not returned the fire, but demanding an official disavowal of the act within a reasonable time, otherwise he should consider it an act of war and should fire on any vessel within the reach of his guns which might attempt to enter or leave the harbor. It is quite evident that if he had adhered to this purpose, the civil war would then have commenced; for the attitude of South Carolina was that of a power claiming complete independence of the United States, and her preparations for driving the United States out of the harbor were prosecuting with great vigor. But the affair took an unexpected, although for the moment it may have been a fortunate turn. The Governor did not disavow, but justified, the act of firing on the *Star of the West*, and on the 11th of January he sent two members of his executive council to Major Anderson, with instructions to present to him "considerations of the gravest public character, and of the deepest interest to all who deprecate the improper waste of life, to induce the delivery of Fort Sumter to the constituted authorities of South Carolina, with a pledge on its part to account for such public property as may be in your charge."

It is difficult now to look back upon those transactions, and to describe them with the coolness which history should preserve. Without the least consideration for the duty incumbent upon the President of the United States under his official oath, the "constituted authorities of South Carolina" assumed from the first a position which they calculated, not without reason, would be supported by the secession leaders of the other cotton States. Their attitude was that their secession ordinance had completely severed the State from all connection with the United States; that the latter power was an intruder in her dominions, holding fortifications which were a standing affront to the dignity and a peril to the safety of the State; that these fortifications must be surrendered to the paramount territorial sovereignty of the State; and that as to the property of the United States which they contained, the State would account for it. The alternative plainly presented was that war must ensue, if these demands were not complied with. It is almost impossible to understand how sane men could have imagined that the Executive Govern-

ment of the United States could be made to yield to such a demand ; but the explanation is to be found in the three facts, that the South Carolina leaders meant to make the issue on the whole doctrine of secession in such a shape as would secure the support of some other States and their representatives in Washington ; that they had reason to count confidently upon the support of the latter ; and that they believed that President Buchanan could be induced or driven into a compliance with their demands, if they presented the alternatives of a complete admission of their right to secede peaceably on the one hand, and civil war on the other.

Perhaps the only thing that Major Anderson could prudently do, after what he considered as a demand upon him for a surrender of the fort, was to do precisely what he did, namely, to refer the whole matter to Washington. His answer to the Governor, sent on the same day, was that he could not comply with the demand, but that "should your Excellency deem fit, prior to a resort to arms, to refer the matter to Washington, it would afford me the sincerest pleasure to depute one of my officers to accompany any messenger you may deem proper to be the bearer of your demand." This proposition was accepted by the Governor, and he commissioned the Attorney General of the State, the Hon. J. W. Hayne, to proceed to Washington and make the same demand on the President that had been made on Major Anderson. Major Anderson, on his part, sent one of his officers, Lieutenant J. Norman Hall, as his deputy, to await the President's decision. The two gentlemen arrived in Washington together, on the evening of January 13th, 1861.

There was thus established between Major Anderson and the Governor of South Carolina a temporary truce of arms, which related to no locality but the harbor of Charleston, and would terminate when Major Anderson should receive his instructions how to act. On the one side, South Carolina, in an armed attitude, demands of Major Anderson the surrender of a fort of the United States, with a plain intimation that if he does not surrender it he must be driven out of it. On the other hand, Major Anderson, who, as the commanding officer of the United States in that harbor, has a just cause for retaliation on account of the attack on the *Star of the West*, proposes a suspension of

all hostilities until he can receive the instructions of his Government. The proposal being accepted and acted upon, the circumstances constituted what President Buchanan, with entire accuracy, and citing the language of Vattel, calls "a partial truce, under which hostilities are suspended only in certain places."\* But the President was greatly surprised by this state of things. The truce made it alike impossible for Major Anderson to ask for, or the Government to send him, reinforcements, while it lasted. All that could be done by the President was to learn what the South Carolina messenger or envoy had to say, and then to decide again that Fort Sumter could not and would not be surrendered. When this had been done, the truce would be ended.†

Colonel Hayne called upon the President on the morning of the 14th of January, stating that he bore a letter from Governor Pickens to the President, which he would deliver in person on the next day. Remembering his experience with the former commissioners from South Carolina, the President declined to hold any conversation with Colonel Hayne on the subject of his errand, and requested that all communications should be made in writing, to which Colonel Hayne assented. On the 15th the Governor's letter was not delivered to the President; it was held back on the advice of certain Southern Senators. The following memorandum, drawn up by the President on the 16th, will explain what those Senators were then trying to accomplish :

Wednesday afternoon, at 4 P. M., January 16.

Senator Clay (of Alabama) called. He began by assigning reasons why I should withdraw Major Anderson and his troops from Fort Sumter. I told him that it was quite out of the question for me to hold verbal communication on this subject. Although I relied implicitly upon his honor, yet there would be mistakes with the best intentions. He concurred in this opinion, but said he would never repeat to any human being what had passed between him and me. I thought, however, I would leave no room for doubt on the important

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\* Buchanan's Defence, p. 144.

† See Ex. Doc., H. R., vol. ix., No. 61. The reader who consults the documents without prejudice cannot fail to be struck with the arrogance of tone and the extreme nature of the demands, that mark all the papers that emanated from the South Carolina authorities at this period. Nor can he fail, I think, to see that President Buchanan, while he exercised great patience, bore himself throughout with the dignity that belonged to his position. When a paper became too outrageous to be tolerated, it was promptly returned.

point, and I told him I would not, under any circumstances, withdraw the troops from Fort Sumter. He spoke of the inauguration of civil war in Charleston as a dreadful calamity. I answered that the troops were there in a small number, in the possession of a fort which I firmly believed belonged to the United States, to act purely on the defensive; and if assaulted by the authorities of South Carolina, on them would rest the exclusive responsibility of commencing civil war. I believed South Carolina still to be a part of the Confederacy.

He then (and I am not certain he did not mention it before) said he had come from the seceding Senators to suggest to me some plan by which the effusion of human blood might be spared at Charleston. I told him any proposition of this kind must be reduced to writing—that without this I could not consider it. Still, he went on and said there was a truce agreed upon, so long as Colonel Hayne was here. I told him I had understood that there had been. He said they wanted him to remain a few days, and submit a proposition to the government of South Carolina, to agree that Major Anderson should be placed in his former position; that the Government should have free access to him; that he should buy all the provisions he wanted in Charleston; and that he should not be disturbed if I would not send him additional reinforcements. I again said that I could not take any proposition into consideration unless it were reduced to writing. He said he understood this perfectly. But [he] went on to say that the truce might be extended until the meeting at Milledgeville, or even till the 4th March. I told him that the truce would continue until Colonel Hayne left here, which I supposed would be in a few days; that Lieutenant Hall had been informed by Colonel Hayne that he might go to see his sick sister in New York, provided he was back on Friday evening. I told him I could say nothing further on the subject of the truce, nor could I express any opinion on the subjects to which he had referred, unless the proposition were reduced to writing, and presented to me in a distinct form. He said I need be under no apprehensions as to the security of the fort. He had just come from Jefferson Davis, who said it could not be taken; and Lars Anderson had informed him that Major Anderson said he did not require reinforcements. He got up and said he would go to those who had sent him, and it would be for them to decide upon the proposition. I then said to him, emphatically, that Colonel Hayne could not possibly be authorized to send any propositions to Charleston until they had been first submitted to myself and cabinet and agreed to. He said certainly not, that this was a necessary preliminary. I repeated again that I could not even consider any verbal proposition. He said he understood that perfectly; that he would not have anything to do with it himself without this. He then asked me when the cabinet would meet. He believed it was to-morrow, and they would not have time to come to an understanding so soon. I said that the regular day was Friday. He said that would give them time, and so he went away.

In the course of conversation I told him that I felt as much anxiety to prevent a collision and spare the effusion of blood as any man living; but this

must be done in consistency with the discharge of all my duties as laid down in my annual message and my late special message. That I could not, and would not, withdraw Major Anderson from Fort Sumter.

What ensued after this interview between the President and Senator Clay can be best related in the President's own words. Every statement that he makes in the following narrative is founded on and supported by the written correspondence.

Colonel Hayne, the commissioner from South Carolina, as already stated, arrived in Washington on the 13th January. He bore with him a letter from Governor Pickens addressed to the President. On the next morning he called upon the President, and stated that he would deliver this letter in person on the day following. The President, however, admonished by his recent experience with the former commissioners, declined to hold any conversation with him on the subject of his mission, and requested that all communications between them might be in writing. To this he assented. Although the President had no actual knowledge of the contents of the Governor's letter, he could not doubt it contained a demand for the surrender of the fort. Such a demand he was at all times prepared peremptorily to reject. This Colonel Hayne must have known, because the President had but a fortnight before informed his predecessors this was impossible, and had never been thought of by him in any possible contingency. The President confidently expected that the letter would be transmitted to him on the day after the interview, when his refusal to surrender the fort would at once terminate the truce, and leave both parties free to act upon their own responsibility. Colonel Hayne, however, did not transmit this letter to the President on the 15th January, according to his promise, but withheld it until the 31st of that month. The reason for this vexatious delay will constitute a curious portion of our narrative, and deserves to be mentioned in some detail. (*Vide* the President's message of 8th February, 1861, with the accompanying documents, Ex. Doc., H. R., vol. ix., No. 61.)

The Senators from the cotton States yet in Congress appeared, strangely enough, to suppose that through their influence the President might agree not to send reinforcements to Fort Sumter, provided Governor Pickens would stipulate not to attack it. By such an agreement they proposed to preserve the peace. But first of all it was necessary for them to prevail upon Colonel Hayne not to transmit the letter to the President on the day appointed, because they well knew that the demand which it contained would meet his prompt and decided refusal. This would render the conclusion of such an agreement impossible.

In furtherance of their plan, nine of these Senators, with Jefferson Davis at their head, addressed a note to Colonel Hayne on the 15th January, requesting him to defer the delivery of the letter. They proposed that he should with-



hold it until they could ascertain from the President whether he would agree not to send reinforcements, provided Governor Pickens would engage not to attack the fort. They informed the Colonel that should the President prove willing in the first place to enter into such an arrangement, they would then strongly recommend that he should not deliver the letter he had in charge for the present, but send to South Carolina for authority from Governor Pickens to become a party thereto. Colonel Hayne, in his answer to these Senators of the 17th January, informed them that he had not been clothed with power to make the arrangements suggested, but provided they could get assurances with which they were entirely satisfied that no reinforcements would be sent to Fort Sumter, he would withhold the letter with which he had been charged, refer their communication to the authorities of South Carolina, and await further instructions.

On the 19th January this correspondence between the Senators and Colonel Hayne was submitted to the President, accompanied by a note from three of their number, requesting him to take the subject into consideration. His answer to this note was delayed no longer than was necessary to prepare it in proper form. On the 22d January it was communicated to these Senators in a letter from the Secretary of War. This contained an express refusal to enter into the proposed agreement. Mr. Holt says: "I am happy to observe that, in your letter to Colonel Hayne, you express the opinion that it is 'especially due from South Carolina to our States, to say nothing of other slaveholding States, that she should, so far as she can consistently with her honor, avoid initiating hostilities between her and the United States or any other power.' To initiate such hostilities against Fort Sumter would, beyond question, be an act of war against the United States. In regard to the proposition of Colonel Hayne, 'that no reinforcements will be sent to Fort Sumter in the interval, and that public peace will not be disturbed by any act of hostility towards South Carolina,' it is impossible for me to give you any such assurances. The President has no authority to enter into such an agreement or understanding. As an executive officer, he is simply bound to protect the public property so far as this may be practicable; and it would be a manifest violation of his duty to place himself under engagements that he would not perform this duty, either for an indefinite, or limited, period. At the present moment it is not deemed necessary to reinforce Major Anderson, because he makes no such request and feels quite secure in his position. Should his safety, however, require reinforcements, every effort will be made to supply them."

It was believed by the President that this peremptory refusal to enter into the proposed agreement, would have caused Colonel Hayne immediately to present the letter he had in charge and thus terminate his mission, thereby releasing both parties from the obligations of the truce. In this expectation the President was disappointed. The secession Senators again interposed, and advised Colonel Hayne still longer to withhold the letter from the President, and await further instructions from Charleston. In his answer of 24th January to their note containing this advice, he [Col. Hayne] informs them that although

the letter from the Secretary of War "was far from being satisfactory," yet in compliance with their request he "would withhold the communication with which he was at present charged, and refer the whole matter to the authorities of South Carolina, and would await their reply." On the 30th this reply was received, and on the next day Colonel Hayne transmitted to the President the letter of Governor Pickens demanding the surrender of the fort, with a long communication from himself. This letter is dated "Headquarters, Charleston, January 12, 1861," and is as follows:

"SIR:—

"At the time of the separation of the State of South Carolina from the United States, Fort Sumter was, and still is, in the possession of troops of the United States, under the command of Major Anderson. I regard that possession as not consistent with the dignity or safety of the State of South Carolina, and have this day [it was the day previous] addressed to Major Anderson a communication to obtain possession of that fort by the authorities of this State. The reply of Major Anderson informs me that he has no authority to do what I required, but he desires a reference of the demand to the President of the United States. Under the circumstances now existing, and which need no comment by me, I have determined to send to you Hon. I. W. Hayne, the Attorney-General of the State of South Carolina, and have instructed him to demand the delivery of Fort Sumter, in the harbor of Charleston, to the constituted authorities of the State of South Carolina. The demand I have made of Major Anderson, and which I now make of you, is suggested by my earnest desire to avoid the bloodshed which a persistence in your attempt to retain possession of that fort will cause, and which will be unavailing to secure to you that possession, but induce a calamity most deeply to be deplored. If consequences so unhappy shall ensue, I will secure for this State, in the demand which I now make, the satisfaction of having exhausted every attempt to avoid it.

"In relation to the public property of the United States within Fort Sumter, the Hon. I. W. Hayne, who will hand you this communication, is authorized to give you the pledge of the State that the valuation of such property will be accounted for by this State, upon the adjustment of its relations with the United States, of which it was a part."

On the 6th February, the Secretary of War, on behalf of the President, replied to this demand, as well as to the letter of Colonel Hayne accompanying it. Our narrative would be incomplete without this admirable and conclusive reply. It is as follows:

"WAR DEPARTMENT, February 6, 1861.\*

"SIR:—

"The President of the United States has received your letter of the 31st ultimo, and has charged me with the duty of replying thereto.

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\* H. R. Ex. Doc., 1860-'61, vol. ix, Doc. No. 61.

In the communication addressed to the President by Governor Pickens, under date of the 12th January, and which accompanies yours now before me, his Excellency says: 'I have determined to send to you the Hon. I. W. Hayne, the Attorney General of the State of South Carolina, and have instructed him to demand the surrender of Fort Sumter, in the harbor of Charleston, to the constituted authorities of the State of South Carolina. The demand I have made of Major Anderson, and which I now make of you, is suggested because of my earnest desire to avoid the bloodshed which a persistence in your attempt to retain possession of that fort will cause, and which will be unavailing to secure to you that possession, but induce a calamity most deeply to be deplored.' The character of the demand thus authorized to be made appears (under the influence, I presume, of the correspondence with the Senators to which you refer) to have been modified by subsequent instructions of his Excellency, dated the 26th, and received by yourself on the 30th January, in which he says: 'If it be so that Fort Sumter is held as property, then, as property, the rights, whatever they may be, of the United States, can be ascertained, and for the satisfaction of these rights the pledge of the State of South Carolina you are authorized to give.' The full scope and precise purport of your instructions, as thus modified, you have expressed in the following words: 'I do not come as a military man to demand the surrender of a fortress, but as the legal officer of the State—its Attorney General—to claim for the State the exercise of its undoubted right of eminent domain, and to pledge the State to make good all injury to the rights of property which arise from the exercise of the claim.' And lest this explicit language should not sufficiently define your position, you add: 'The proposition now is that her [South Carolina's] law officer should, under authority of the Governor and his council, distinctly pledge the faith of South Carolina to make such compensation, in regard to Fort Sumter and its appurtenances and contents, to the full extent of the money value of the property of the United States, delivered over to the authorities of South Carolina by your command.' You then adopt his Excellency's train of thought upon the subject, so far as to suggest that the possession of Fort Sumter by the United States, 'if continued long enough, must lead to collision,' and that 'an attack upon it would scarcely improve it as property, whatever the result; and if captured, it would no longer be the subject of account.'

"The proposal, then, now presented to the President, is simply an offer on the part of South Carolina to buy Fort Sumter and contents as property of the United States, sustained by a declaration in effect, that if she is not permitted to make the purchase, she will seize the fort by force of arms. As the initiation of a negotiation for the transfer of property between friendly governments, this proposal impresses the President as having assumed a most unusual form. He has, however, investigated the claim on which it professes to be based, apart from the declaration that accompanies it. And it may be here remarked, that much stress has been laid upon the employment of the words 'property' and 'public property' by the President in his several

messages. These are the most comprehensive terms which can be used in such a connection, and surely, when referring to a fort or any other public establishment, they embrace the entire and undivided interest of the Government therein.

"The title of the United States to Fort Sumter is complete and incontestable. Were its interest in this property purely proprietary, in the ordinary acceptance of the term, it might probably be subjected to the exercise of the right of eminent domain; but it has also political relations to it of a much higher and more imposing character than those of mere proprietorship. It has absolute jurisdiction over the fort and the soil on which it stands. This jurisdiction consists in the authority to 'exercise exclusive legislation' over the property referred to, and is therefore clearly incompatible with the claim of eminent domain now insisted upon by South Carolina. This authority was not derived from any questionable revolutionary source, but from the peaceful cession of South Carolina herself, acting through her legislature, under a provision of the Constitution of the United States. South Carolina can no more assert the right of eminent domain over Fort Sumter than Maryland can assert it over the District of Columbia. The political and proprietary rights of the United States in either case rest upon precisely the same ground.

"The President, however, is relieved from the necessity of further pursuing this inquiry by the fact that, whatever may be the claim of South Carolina to this fort, he has no constitutional power to cede or surrender it. The property of the United States has been acquired by force of public law, and can only be disposed of under the same solemn sanctions. The President, as the head of the executive branch of the Government only, can no more sell and transfer Fort Sumter to South Carolina than he can sell and convey the Capitol of the United States to Maryland or to any other State or individual seeking to possess it. His Excellency the Governor is too familiar with the Constitution of the United States, and with the limitations upon the powers of the Chief Magistrate of the Government it has established, not to appreciate at once the soundness of this legal proposition. The question of reinforcing Fort Sumter is so fully disposed of in my letter to Senator Slidell and others, under date of the 22d of January, a copy of which accompanies this, that its discussion will not now be renewed. I then said: 'At the present moment it is not deemed necessary to reinforce Major Anderson, because he makes no such request. Should his safety, however, require reinforcements, every effort will be made to supply them.' I can add nothing to the explicitness of this language, which still applies to the existing status.

"The right to send forward reinforcements when, in the judgment of the President, the safety of the garrison requires them, rests on the same unquestionable foundation as the right to occupy the fortress itself. In the letter of Senator Davis and others to yourself, under date of the 15th ultimo, they say: 'We therefore think it especially due from South Carolina to our States—to say nothing of other slaveholding States—that she should, as far as she can

consistently with her honor, avoid initiating hostilities between her and the United States or any other power;' and you now yourself give to the President the gratifying assurance that 'South Carolina has every disposition to preserve the public peace;' and since he is himself sincerely animated by the same desire, it would seem that this common and patriotic object must be of certain attainment. It is difficult, however, to reconcile with this assurance the declaration on your part that 'it is a consideration of her [South Carolina's] own dignity as a sovereign, and the safety of her people, which prompts her to demand that this property should not longer be used as a military post by a government she no longer acknowledges,' and the thought you so constantly present, that this occupation must lead to a collision of arms and the prevalence of civil war. Fort Sumter is in itself a military post, and nothing else; and it would seem that not so much the fact as the purpose of its use should give to it a hostile or friendly character. This fortress is now held by the Government of the United States for the same objects for which it has been held from the completion of its construction. These are national and defensive; and were a public enemy now to attempt the capture of Charleston or the destruction of the commerce of its harbor, the whole force of the batteries of this fortress would be at once exerted for their protection. How the presence of a small garrison, actuated by such a spirit as this, can compromise the dignity or honor of South Carolina, or become a source of irritation to her people, the President is at a loss to understand. The attitude of that garrison, as has been often declared, is neither menacing, nor defiant, nor unfriendly. It is acting under orders to stand strictly on the defensive; and the government and people of South Carolina must well know that they can never receive aught but shelter from its guns, unless, in the absence of all provocation, they should assault it and seek its destruction. The intent with which this fortress is held by the President is truthfully stated by Senator Davis and others in their letter to yourself of the 15th January, in which they say: 'It is not held with any hostile or unfriendly purpose toward your State, but merely as property of the United States, which the President deems it his duty to protect and preserve.'

"If the announcement so repeatedly made of the President's pacific purposes in continuing the occupation of Fort Sumter until the question shall have been settled by competent authority, has failed to impress the government of South Carolina, the forbearing conduct of his administration for the last few months should be received as conclusive evidence of his sincerity, And if this forbearance, in view of the circumstances which have so severely tried it, be not accepted as a satisfactory pledge of the peaceful policy of this administration toward South Carolina, then it may be safely affirmed that neither language nor conduct can possibly furnish one. If, with all the multiplied proofs which exist of the President's anxiety for peace, and of the earnestness with which he has pursued it, the authorities of that State shall assault Fort Sumter, and peril the lives of the handful of brave and loyal men shut up within its walls, and thus plunge our common country into the

horrors of civil war, then upon them and those they represent must rest the responsibility.

"Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

"J. HOLT,

"HON. L. W. HAYNE,

"Secretary of War.

"Attorney General of the State of South Carolina.

"P.S.—The President has not, as you have been informed, received a copy of the letter to yourself from the Senators, communicating that of Mr. Holt of the 22d January."

This letter of Mr. Holt, though firm and decided in character, is courteous and respectful, both in tone and in terms. It reviews the subject in an able and comprehensive manner, explaining and justifying the conduct of the President. Unlike the letters to which it is a response, it contains no menace. In conclusion, it does no more than fix the responsibility of commencing a civil war on the authorities of South Carolina, should they assault Fort Sumter and imperil the lives of the brave and loyal men shut up within its walls. It does not contain a word or an expression calculated to afford just cause of offence; yet its statements and its arguments must have cut Colonel Hayne to the quick. To reply to them successfully was impossible. He, therefore, had no resort but to get angry. Following in the footsteps of his predecessors, on the 8th February he addressed an insulting answer, not to Secretary Holt, as usage and common civility required, but directly to the President. He then suddenly left Washington, leaving his missile behind him to be delivered after his departure. From his conduct he evidently anticipated its fate. His letter was returned to him on the same day, directed to Charleston, with the following indorsement: "The character of this letter is such that it cannot be received. Colonel Hayne having left the city before it was sent to the President, it is returned to him by the first mail." What has become of it we do not know. No copy of it was retained, nor have we ever heard of it since.

What effect this letter of Mr. Holt may have produced upon the truculent Governor of South Carolina we shall not attempt to decide. Certain it is, from whatever cause, no attack was made upon Fort Sumter until six weeks after the close of Mr. Buchanan's administration. The fort remained unmolested until South Carolina had been for some time a member of the Confederate States. It was reserved for Mr. Jefferson Davis, their President, to issue the order for its bombardment, and thus formally to commence the civil war. This he did with a full consciousness that such would be the fatal effect; because in the letter from him and other Southern Senators to Colonel Hayne, of the 15th January, both he and they had warned Governor Pickens that an attack upon the fort would be "the instituting hostilities between her [South Carolina] and the United States."

Thus ended the second mission from South Carolina to the President, and thus was he relieved from the truce concluded by Major Anderson. But in

the mean time, before the termination of this truce, the action of the General Assembly of Virginia, instituting the Peace Convention, had interposed an insurmountable obstacle to the reinforcement of Fort Sumter, unless attacked or in immediate danger of attack, without entirely defeating this beneficent measure.

The attention of the reader must now be directed to the harbor of Pensacola. To unravel and correct the misrepresentations which have been accepted as part of the history of Mr. Buchanan's administration, is no agreeable, but it is a very necessary duty. If General Scott, at this period of his life, had not been a man very far advanced in years and burthened with increasing infirmities, he ought to be held to a severer responsibility than I am disposed to apply to him, on account of the entirely unwarrantable imputations which, with great personal inconsistency, he allowed himself to cast upon Mr. Buchanan, after the latter had retired to private life, and after new men had come into power who made it their policy to blame the preceding President.

Pensacola, a town in the western end of the State of Florida, is on a broad bay of the same name, which opens into the Gulf of Mexico. The narrow entrance is commanded by Fort Pickens, built on the extreme western point of Santa Rosa Island, and standing boldly upon the Gulf. This fortress, unlike Fort Sumter, could be relieved at any time by a naval force, which nothing could assail before the fort was reached. Florida "seceded" on the 10th of January. The command of the State troops was assumed by Colonel William H. Chase, previously an officer of the United States corps of engineers. These State forces suddenly expelled a small body of United States troops from the town of Pensacola and the adjacent navy yard. This body of regular troops was under the command of Lieutenant Slemmer, an officer of the artillery, and it consisted of between seventy and eighty men. They took refuge in Fort Pickens. Unless relieved, they were in great danger of being captured by a much superior force, and they were in pressing need of provisions. General Scott's charge against Mr. Buchanan, made in a paper which he presented to President Lincoln in 1861, and which he called a report, was couched in the following language:

“The Brooklyn, with Captain Vogdes’ company alone, left the Chesapeake for Fort Pickens about January 22d, and on the 29th, President Buchanan having entered into a *quasi* armistice with certain leading seceders at Pensacola and elsewhere, caused Secretaries Holt and Toucey to instruct, in a joint note, the commanders of the war vessels off Pensacola, and Lieutenant Slemmer, commanding Fort Pickens, to commit no act of hostility, and not to land Captain Vogdes’ company unless the fort should be attacked. That joint note I never saw, but suppose the armistice was consequent upon the Peace Convention at Washington, and was understood to terminate with it.”

The facts are as follows :

1. General Scott not only saw the joint order issued by Secretaries Holt and Toucey, but he approved of it entirely. This is made certain by a note written by Mr. Holt to the President, on the day the order was issued, the 29th of January, informing him of the fact. The original of this note was sealed up by the President and put away. It reads as follows :

[SECRETARY HOLT TO THE PRESIDENT.]

“MY DEAR SIR:—

“The words [of the joint order] are ‘the provisions *necessary* for the supply of the fort you will land.’ I think the language could not be more carefully guarded. If, on communication with the fort, it is found that no provisions are needed, then none will be landed.

“I have the satisfaction of saying that on submitting the paper to General Scott, he expressed himself satisfied with it, saying that there could be no objection to the arrangement in a military point of view or otherwise.

“Sincerely yours,

“J. HOLT.”

2. The Brooklyn, which, after her return from her cruise in search of the Star of the West, had lain in Hampton Roads ready for any emergency, sailed on the 24th of January for Fort Pickens, with Captain Vogdes’ company of artillery, from Fortress Monroe, and with provisions and military stores. Previous to this, the Secretary of the Navy, as a measure of precaution, had withdrawn from foreign stations all the war vessels



that could be spared, and the home squadron was thus made unusually large in the Gulf of Mexico.\*

3. The circumstances which led to the joint order of January 29th were the following: On the 28th, four days after the Brooklyn sailed, Senators Slidell, of Louisiana, Hunter, of Virginia, and Bigler, of Pennsylvania, received a telegraphic despatch from Senator Mallory, then at Pensacola, with a request that it be laid before the President. It gave the most positive assurances of both Mallory and Chase that no attack would be made on the fort, if its present status should be allowed to remain, and it expressed an anxious desire to preserve peace. Notwithstanding these assurances, the President was careful not to tie his own hands, in regard to Pensacola, as they had been tied for a time by Major Anderson, in regard to Charleston. The Brooklyn might not arrive in time to preserve Fort Pickens, or to supply it with provisions, which must, if needed, be thrown in at every hazard: and while it was of the utmost importance that no collision should occur at that point, and at a moment when the Peace Convention was about to assemble, it was equally important that Mr. Mallory and Colonel Chase should be made to understand that the fleet in the Gulf of Mexico would act, at a moment's warning, not only in the event of any attack upon the fort, but whenever the officer in command should observe that preparations were making for an attack. A cabinet council was accordingly held on the day on which the President saw Mr. Mallory's despatch to the three Senators, and with the approbation of every member of the cabinet, the President directed the Secretaries of War and of the Navy to issue the following joint order, and to transmit it immediately by telegraph to the naval officers in the Gulf, including the commander of the Brooklyn, and to Lieutenant Slemmer:

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\* Writing on the 25th of June, 1861, to Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Toucey says: "The naval force assembled at Pensacola under your administration consisted of the steamship Brooklyn, the frigate Sabine, the sloop of war Macedonian, the steamer Wyandotte, and for a time the sloop of war St. Louis. Without including the troops on board the Brooklyn, this squadron could have thrown a reinforcement of six or seven hundred men into Fort Pickens at any time."

WASHINGTON, January 29, 1861.

To JAMES GLYNN, Comdg. the "Macedonian," Captain W. S. WALKER, Comdg. the "Brooklyn," and other Naval Officers in command, and 1st Lieut. A. J. SLEMMER, First Artillery, commanding Fort Pickens, Pensacola, Florida :—

In consequence of the assurances received from Mr. Mallory in a telegram of yesterday to Messrs. Slidell, Hunter, and Bigler, with a request it should be laid before the President, that Fort Pickens would not be assaulted, and an offer of an assurance to the same effect from Col. Chase, for the purpose of avoiding a hostile collision, upon receiving satisfactory assurances from Mr. Mallory and Col. Chase that Fort Pickens will not be attacked, you are instructed not to land the company on board the Brooklyn, unless said fort shall be attacked, or preparations shall be made for its attack. The provisions necessary for the supply of the fort you will land. The Brooklyn and the other vessels of war on the station will remain, and you will exercise the utmost vigilance, and be prepared at a moment's warning to land the company at Fort Pickens, and you and they will instantly repel any attack on the fort. The President yesterday sent a special message to Congress, commending the Virginia Resolutions of Compromise. The commissioners of different States are to meet here on Monday, the 4th of February, and it is important that during their session a collision of arms should be avoided, unless an attack should be made, or there should be preparations for such an attack. In either event the Brooklyn and the other vessels will act promptly.

Your right and that of the other officers in command at Pensacola freely to communicate with the Government by special messenger, and its right in the same manner to communicate with yourself and them, will remain intact as the basis on which the present instruction is given.\*

J. HOLT, Secretary of War,

ISAAC TOUCEY, Secretary of the Navy.

4. On the morning of the same day on which this joint order was issued, Senator Bigler called at the White House, but being unable to wait for an interview with the President, he

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\* This order, which was given by the Secretary of War to Captain Vogdes, was founded on and embodied a memorandum of instructions drawn up by the President himself, which now lies before me in his handwriting :

"You are instructed, for the purpose of avoiding a hostile collision, not to land your company and stores at Fort Pickens, upon receiving satisfactory assurances from Major Chase and Mr. Mallory that the fort will not be attacked. The Brooklyn and the other vessels of war in the vicinity will remain, and she will land the company and provisions and defend Fort Pickens, should it be attacked, exercising the utmost vigilance. The President yesterday sent a special message to Congress commending the Virginia Resolutions of Compromise. The commissioners of different States are to meet here on Monday next, 4th February. During their session, a collision of arms ought to be avoided, unless an attack should be made on Fort Pickens, and then it must be repelled."

dictated to the private secretary the following message to the President :

"I have seen Mr. Slidell and Mr. Hunter. They both think it very important that collisions should be avoided, and have no doubt of the truth of all that Mr. Mallory has said. They think also that the Brooklyn might be very properly kept there to succor the fort in case of attack. Of course no despatch will be sent to Mr. Mallory, unless authorized by you. You might send such a despatch to the Senate Chamber, as you may desire to have sent."

(Taken down from Mr. Bigler's dictation, he being unable to remain on account of meeting of tariff committee.

A. J. G.\*

Tuesday morning, January 29, 1861.)

5. On the arrival of the joint order at Pensacola, Mr. Mallory and Colonel Chase gave to the naval and military commanders of the United States the assurances which the order required. The Brooklyn did not reach Pensacola until the 5th of February. But under the order the fort was supplied with provisions, and made perfectly secure from any attack. No attack was made, and the fort remained in the possession of the Government from that time forward.

It is thus apparent that, with reference to Fort Pickens, the whole arrangement, although it amounted to a qualified armistice, differed absolutely from that made by Major Anderson with Governor Pickens, in regard to Fort Sumter. Anderson agreed to a temporary suspension of arms on both sides. The President, in respect to Fort Pickens, instructed the naval and military officers to defend the fort against any attack, and not to wait for an actual attack, but to succor Lieut. Slemmer on the instant that they perceived any preparations for attacking him. It is impossible to suggest in what way the President could have more effectually protected the rights of the Government, on the eve of the assembling of the Peace Convention. Fort Pickens, with the Brooklyn, the Macedonian, and other war vessels in its immediate neighborhood, and in the hands of Lieut. Slemmer, was just as safe as if ten thousand men had been thrown into it, while the precautions taken pre-

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\* A. J. Glosbrenner, private secretary to the President. The original memorandum in Mr. Glosbrenner's handwriting is before me.

vented any outbreak that would, if any had occurred, have prostrated the hope with which the country was looking to the labors of the Peace Convention.

How great were the anxieties felt by the Virginians whose State had proposed that assembly, may be seen from an account which may now be given of the informal intercourse between ex-President Tyler and President Buchanan. Mr. Tyler was alarmed when he arrived in Washington and heard that the Brooklyn had sailed with troops for some Southern fort. As all eyes and thoughts were then directed to the harbor of Charleston, Mr. Tyler took the readiest means to ascertain what he could respecting the Brooklyn's destination. On the evening of January 25th, he addressed to the President the following note :

[MR. TYLER TO THE PRESIDENT.]

Friday evening, January 25, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR :—

The enclosed telegraphic despatch is this moment received. May I be permitted to hope that it is based on an unfounded report. If not, will you do me the favor to inform me on what day the Brooklyn sailed, and whether she has recruits for any Southern fort, and if so, which ?

With high regard, yours most truly,

JOHN TYLER.

The President's answer was as follows :

[PRESIDENT BUCHANAN TO MR. TYLER.]

January 25, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR :—

I have just received your note. The orders were given to the Brooklyn, I believe, on Monday or Tuesday last—certainly before your arrival in this city. She goes on an errand of mercy and relief. If she had not been sent, it would have been an abandonment of our highest duty. Her movements are in no way connected with South Carolina.

Your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

Mr. Tyler returned to Richmond on the 29th, and before he left the following notes were exchanged between him and the President :

[MR. TYLER TO THE PRESIDENT.]

BROWN'S HOTEL, January 28, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I leave the city to-morrow morning for the brief interval that elapses between this and the meeting of the [Peace] commissioners on the 4th February. In making my adieus, which I would do in person but for engagements which prevent, I desire to express my pleasure at hearing your message read to-day in the Senate, and to tender to you my acknowledgments for the facilities you have afforded me of acquitting myself of the mission with which my State entrusted me. I feel but one regret in all that has occurred, and that is in the sailing of the Brooklyn, under orders issued before my arrival in this city. I hope, however, that she sailed with such instructions as, if followed, will prevent any collision. There is nothing that I more sincerely desire than that your administration may close amid the rejoicings of a great people at the consummation of the work of a renewed and more harmonious confederacy.

Will you pardon me for calling your attention to the rumor contained in the newspapers of the morning, which state that active proceedings are in course of execution at Fortress Monroe, in planting cannon upon the land side of the fort, with their muzzles turned landward and overlooking the country? If this be so, Mr. President, is such proceeding either appropriate or well-timed? I shall do no more than call your attention to the circumstance, and leave it without comment, with this single remark: that when Virginia is making every possible effort to redeem and save the Union, it is seemingly ungracious to have cannon levelled at her bosom.

With my most cordial wish for your success in steering the ship of State amid the critical relations of the country,

I am, dear Sir, truly and faithfully yours,

JOHN TYLER.

[PRESIDENT BUCHANAN TO MR. TYLER.]

WASHINGTON, January 28, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your note of this evening, and am happy to learn that you were pleased at hearing my message read to-day in the Senate. It expresses my sincere and cordial sentiments. My best wishes attend you on your journey home and for your safe return to this city on the 4th February. I shall then hope to see more of you.

I shall make it a point to inquire to-morrow morning into the rumors in the newspapers, to which you refer, in relation to Fortress Monroe.

Yours very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

Mr. Tyler was again in Washington on the 4th of February,

to attend the sessions of the Peace Convention, of which he was made the presiding officer. On the 7th the members of that body were received by the President. On the 8th Mr. Tyler, still anxious in regard to the situation of things in Charleston, called upon the President, and I find in the handwriting of the latter the following account of their interview :

Friday, February 8th, 1861.

President Tyler and his lady called to see me at about three o'clock in the afternoon. They informed me that Colonel Hayne became much excited on the perusal of Mr. Holt's last letter, and considered it highly insulting in its character. I told him that this must be a mere pretext,—there was nothing in that letter unkind or disrespectful, and certainly there was no intention to write anything but what was respectful, as its whole tenor would prove.

In answer to it I had received one of the most outrageous and insulting letters from Colonel Hayne which had ever been addressed to the head of any government. He told me he would send for Colonel Hayne, and get him to withdraw the letter. I told him Colonel Hayne had left that morning at six o'clock, and his letter was not delivered to me until between eleven and twelve.

He asked me if he might telegraph to Governor Pickens what I had said relative to the character of Mr. Holt's letter. I told him certainly he might, he was at perfect liberty to do so. The letter would speak for itself, and I asked him if he had read it, and he said he had not.

He then asked me and urged upon me to permit him to telegraph to Colonel Hayne that I would not send reinforcements to the garrison if Governor Pickens would pledge himself that he would not attack it. I told him this was impossible. I could not agree to bind myself not to reinforce the garrison in case I deemed it necessary. That Mr. Holt's letter showed that these reinforcements had not yet been ordered, but that the character of Colonel Hayne's letter was such that these might be immediately necessary.

Mr. Tyler strongly urged that I should withdraw the garrison, and urged reasons to that effect. I told him this was quite impossible—that I could never voluntarily surrender the property of the United States which it was my solemn and imperative duty to protect and defend. (He afterwards addressed me a note, urging the same policy, which I did not answer.)

In order to prevent all mistakes, I told him explicitly, as he was about departing, that he was not authorized to telegraph anything to Governor Pickens except as to the character of Mr. Holt's letter ; that it was not insulting or disrespectful, but, on the contrary, it was kind and respectful in its tone, and was so intended both by the writer and myself. I then informed him that I had sent Colonel Hayne's letter back to him. He said such a letter was highly improper, addressed to the head of a government.

[MR. TYLER TO THE PRESIDENT.]

Saturday evening, February 9, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I communicated to Governor Pickens what passed between us as to Mr. Holt's letter, and I am happy to say that the reply, received a moment ago, leaves me no ground to fear any early disturbance. The whole subject is referred to the convention at Montgomery, as I plainly infer. The conclusion is in these words: "Everything which can be done consistently with the honor and safety of this State to avoid collision and bloodshed, has been and will be the purpose of the authorities here."

Thus, my dear sir, the inquietude you expressed may be dismissed.

Very truly and faithfully yours,

JOHN TYLER.

It will be remembered, that on the 19th of February, the President received information from Philadelphia, by a copy of a telegram said to have been forwarded from Governor Pickens through Augusta to Montgomery, that the Governor was urging an immediate attack on Fort Sumter. This information the President at once communicated to Mr. Tyler. The following notes disclose what Mr. Tyler learned:

[MR. TYLER TO THE PRESIDENT.]

Tuesday, February 19, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I do not believe a word of it. My last despatch from Judge Robertson is wholly different. I am at the moment so engaged that I cannot hasten to you. I will as soon as I can.

Respectfully, your friend,

JOHN TYLER.

Wednesday, February 20, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I despatched the telegram at about 5 o'clock. No answer yet. Perhaps it was referred to Montgomery, or time may not have been given to respond before the close of the office. A consultation of cabinet may have been required. In short, many things of a similar nature may have occurred. General Davis will be written to to-day. No attack can be made without orders from Montgomery.

Truly yours,

JOHN TYLER.

Two o'clock P.M., February 20, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have this moment received a telegram from Charleston. The Governor says: "Received your message; know nothing about the report you speak

of; no one is authorized to speak for me; things must stand without any movement in force." I would send the despatch, but the latter part of it relates to another matter.

Truly and sincerely your friend,

JOHN TYLER.

BROWN'S HOTEL, February 24, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I think you may rely upon tranquility at the South. Since you left me I have made particular inquiries. General Davis has been written to and will be written to. He is advised to send a commissioner, and to go to Charleston himself to represent and quiet all things. In fact, from information from one directly from Richmond, and who travelled with merchants from the South going North, the probability is that he is now in Charleston. The fact may probably be announced in the papers to-morrow. Every one that I have seen, secessionists and others, concur with myself in the improbability of any movement until a commissioner shall come on here and a failure in the mission.

Truly and faithfully yours,

JOHN TYLER.

The explanation of the last of these notes is that Mr. Jefferson Davis had assumed at this time, at Montgomery, the office of President of the Confederate States. His inaugural address was delivered on the 18th of February, and his cabinet was organized immediately thereafter. In compliance with the intimation sent by Mr. Tyler, steps were at once taken by Mr. Davis to send commissioners to Washington. It was, therefore, not the "cue" of the Confederate government to have an immediate attack made on Fort Sumter. Mr. Davis did not go to Charleston, but he doubtless exerted there, for a time, the influence which Mr. Tyler desired.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

1861—January, February, and March.

INTERVENTION OF VIRGINIA TO PREVENT A COLLISION OF ARMS—EX-PRESIDENT TYLER'S MISSION TO THE PRESIDENT—THE PRESIDENT'S PREPARATIONS TO REINFORCE ANDERSON, IN CASE OF NECESSITY—THE MONTGOMERY CONGRESS AND THE CONFEDERATE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT—MR. LINCOLN'S JOURNEY TO WASHINGTON—THE NEGLECTS OF CONGRESS.

TO a right understanding of these complicated affairs that were occurring in the months of January and February, many threads require to be taken up separately, and interwoven in the narrative. The last messenger or envoy from South Carolina, Colonel Hayne, was in Washington from the 13th of January to the 8th of February, during which period, as the reader has seen, the President's hands were so far tied by Major Anderson's truce, that reinforcements could not be sent to him while it lasted. But after this temporary truce began, and before it terminated, there occurred another intervention, altogether different from that of any of the Senators. This was the action of the General Assembly of Virginia, which, besides instituting the Peace Convention, took, at the same time, a step which interposed an insurmountable obstacle to the reinforcement of Fort Sumter, unless it should be attacked, or be in immediate danger of attack. There is no reason to doubt that what the State of Virginia then did was done in entire good faith, and with an honorable and beneficent purpose to preserve the peace of the country. At all events, the President was not at liberty to regard her action in any other light, nor was he disposed to do so.

On the 19th of January, ten days after the affair of the Star of the West, and six days after the arrival of Colonel Hayne in Washington, the General Assembly of Virginia, among their

other proceedings, appointed ex-President Tyler a commissioner to the President of the United States, and Judge John Robertson a commissioner to the State of South Carolina and the other States which had seceded, or might thereafter secede, with instructions to procure a mutual agreement to "abstain from any and all acts calculated to produce a collision of arms between the States and the Government of the United States," pending the proceedings of the Peace Convention. Mr. Tyler, who was also a member of the Peace Convention, arrived in Washington on the 23d of January, two weeks before the departure of Col. Hayne. On the following day, he presented the resolutions of his State to the President, at the same time assuring him that the efforts of Virginia to secure peace and a reconstruction of the basis of the Union depended for their success on her being allowed to conduct them undisturbed by any outside collision. The resolutions of Virginia requested the President, and not Congress, to enter into the proposed agreement. The President, already informed unofficially of the tenor of the resolutions, was then preparing a special message to Congress on the subject.\* What occurred at this first interview between Mr. Tyler and the President will appear from the following memorandum the original of which is in the President's handwriting:

Thursday morning, January 24, 1861.

Mr. Tyler called and delivered me his credentials, and we had a conference. I foreshadowed to him the principal points of my message as [it was] delivered. He preferred that I should enter into the arrangement myself. We discussed this question for some time, and I was decided that I had no power. He then expressed an apprehension that my message might precipitate action in Congress. I told him I thought not. I sent for Governor Bigler that he might consult him on this point, but Governor Bigler had gone to the Senate.

Friday morning, 25th.

Mr. Tyler called again, and Mr. Bigler came. I read to him the principal points of the message. He was anxious it should be sent that day, and I immediately proceeded to put it in form. I told him it should be sent in that day, or at latest on Saturday morning. But the Senate adjourned over till Monday at an early hour, and my purpose was thus defeated.

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\* Message of January 28, 1861.

Mr. Buchanan has said that while he had no constitutional power to enter into the agreement proposed, it was due to its intrinsic importance and to the State of Virginia, which had manifested so strong a desire to restore and preserve the Union, that the proposal should be submitted to Congress.\*

The President, accordingly, in his message of the 28th January, submitting the Virginia resolutions to Congress, observed in regard to this one, that "however strong may be my desire to enter into such an agreement, I am convinced that I do not possess the power. Congress, and Congress alone, under the war-making power, can exercise the discretion of agreeing to abstain 'from any and all acts calculated to produce a collision of arms' between this and any other Government. It would, therefore, be a usurpation for the Executive to attempt to restrain their hands by an agreement in regard to matters over which he has no constitutional control. If he were thus to act, they might pass laws which he would be bound to obey, though in conflict with his agreement. Under existing circumstances, my present actual power is confined within narrow limits. It is my duty at all times to defend and protect the public property within the seceding States, so far as this may be practicable, and especially to employ all constitutional means to protect the property of the United States, and to preserve the public peace at this the seat of the Federal Government. If the seceding States abstain 'from any and all acts calculated to produce a collision of arms,' then the danger so much to be deprecated will no longer exist. Defence, and not aggression, has been the policy of the administration from the beginning. But whilst I can enter into no engagement such as that proposed, I cordially commend to Congress, with much confidence that it will meet their approbation, to abstain from passing any law calculated to produce a collision of arms pending the proceedings contemplated by the action of the General Assembly of Virginia. I am one of those who will never despair of the Republic. I yet cherish the belief that the American people will perpetuate the union of the States on some terms just and honorable for all sections of the country. I trust that the mediation of Virginia may be the destined means, under Providence, of accomplishing this inestimable benefit. Glorious as are the memories of her past history, such an achievement, both in relation to her own fame and the welfare of the whole country, would surpass them all."

This noble and patriotic effort of Virginia met no favor from Congress. Neither House referred these resolutions of her General Assembly to a committee, or even treated them with the common courtesy of ordering them to be printed. In the Senate no motion was made to refer them, and the question to print them with the accompanying message was debated from time to time until the 21st February,† when the Peace Convention had nearly completed its labors, and after this no further notice seems to have been taken of

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\* Buchanan's Defence, p. 206† *Cong. Globe*, pp. 590, 636.

the subject. In the House the motion to refer and print the Virginia resolutions, made by Mr. Stanton, of Ohio, on the day they were received, was never afterwards noticed.\* This mortifying neglect on the part of the Representatives of the States and of the people, made a deep and unfortunate impression on the citizens of Virginia.†

The President having laid this whole matter before Congress, with whom it appropriately belonged, the question now recurs whether he omitted any thing that it was in his power to do, during the session of the Peace Convention. It was manifestly his duty to be prepared, to the extent of all the means at his command, when Anderson's truce had terminated, to send him reinforcements, should Anderson request them, or should it be known from any other quarter that Fort Sumter was in danger of attack. Congress might not, as it did not, assume any part of its just responsibility; and it was not known until some days after the termination of Major Anderson's truce, on the 6th of February, that the Governor of South Carolina had determined to respect the wishes of the Virginia Legislature, and refrain from attacking the fort while the Peace Convention was sitting.‡

Without waiting to know how Congress might treat this proposal of the Virginia General Assembly, the President, on the 30th of January, addressed the following note to the Secretary of War, Mr. Holt :

WASHINGTON, January 30th, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

It is time we should have decided whether it is practicable with the means in our power, considering the obstacles interposed in the harbor of Charleston, to reinforce Major Anderson at Fort Sumter, should the action of the authorities of South Carolina, or his request, render this necessary. The high military attainments and just reputation of General Scott render his advice on this subject of the greatest importance. Should reinforcements be deemed practicable, then, in consultation with him, a plan ought to be devised in advance to accomplish the object. I should be gratified to see General Scott, the Secretary of the Navy, and yourself, at twelve o'clock to-day, or any other hour most convenient to yourselves, to talk over this and other matters.

Your friend very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

\* H. J., p. 236. *Cong. Globe*, p. 601.

‡ Buchanan's Defence, p. 209.

† Buchanan's Defence, pp. 207, 208.

The result of the conference appointed by this note has been given by Mr. Buchanan himself :

After several consultations, an expedition for this purpose was quietly prepared at New York, under the direction of Secretary Toucey, for the relief of Fort Sumter, the command of which was intrusted to his intimate friend, the late lamented Commander Ward of the navy. This gallant officer had been authorized to select his own officers and men, who were to rendezvous on board the receiving-ship, of which he was then in command. The expedition consisted of a few small steamers, and it was arranged that on receiving a telegraphic despatch from the Secretary, whenever the emergency might require, he should, in the course of the following night, set sail for Charleston, entering the harbor in the night, and anchoring if possible under the guns of Fort Sumter.

It is due to the memory of this brave officer to state that he had sought the enterprise with the greatest enthusiasm, and was willing to sacrifice his life in the accomplishment of the object, should such be his fate, saying to Secretary Toucey, this would be the best inheritance he could leave to his wife and children.\*

This expedition did not sail. It consisted of a few small vessels borrowed from the Treasury Department, with two or three hundred men. While it was preparing, the Peace Convention was in session ; and as it had become known to the President that the authorities of South Carolina were then respecting the appeal of the General Assembly of Virginia to avoid collision, it would have broken up the Peace Convention to send reinforcements to Major Anderson, unless he asked for them ; and it would inevitably have led to an immediate assault upon the fort, which would have been the signal for a civil war. These considerations caused some delay in issuing the orders to Commander Ward. In point of fact, Major Anderson not only did not ask for reinforcements, but on the 30th of January, the day on which the President summoned the Secretaries of War and the Navy and General Scott to a conference, Anderson wrote to the War Department that he hoped no attempt would be made to throw in supplies ; that it would do more harm than good. From later advices received from him, it became apparent that this small expedition under Commander Ward could not enter the harbor of Charleston without a fearful sacrifice of life. It was therefore kept back, but kept in

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\* Buchanan's Defence, p. 210.

readiness, at New York, until the 5th day of March, on which day President Lincoln was fully informed of it, and of the circumstances which had prevented its sailing, by the retiring Secretary of War, Mr. Holt, with the concurrence of President Buchanan.

Without anticipating, however, what occurred on the last day of Mr. Buchanan's administration, and on the day following, it is only needful to say here that Fort Sumter remained unmolested by any actual attack, until some time after Mr. Lincoln's inauguration, although the disposition of the authorities of South Carolina continued to be as hostile as ever. On the 4th of February, a Congress of the States which had then seceded was held at Montgomery in Alabama. These were the States of South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia and Louisiana. The delegates to this Congress were appointed by conventions of their respective States. This body framed a provisional constitution for the new Confederacy, which they styled the "Confederate States of America." It was adopted by the Congress on the 8th of February, and was to continue in force for one year, unless it should be superseded at an earlier period by a permanent organization. Jefferson Davis was elected President, and Alexander H. Stephens Vice President, of the new Confederacy. No popular election of Congress was ordered, but the legislative powers were vested "in this Congress now assembled, until otherwise ordered."\*

The authorities of South Carolina immediately began to look to the Montgomery government for direction. On the 14th of February, a telegraph operator in Augusta, Georgia, transmitted a despatch from Charleston to Montgomery, urging the Southern Congress to do something definite in regard to Fort Sumter, and asking whether the Congress would appoint a General to lead the attack, or whether it should be done under the superintendence of Governor Pickens, who said, "the fort must be taken before Lincoln takes his seat."† Comparing the date on

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\* The reader who desires to examine the provisional constitution will find it in Mr. Jefferson Davis's work on the Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government, Appendix.

† My authority for this statement is a letter written on the 19th of February to President Buchanan from Philadelphia, by an intimate friend of his, giving an extract from a letter from the telegraph operator, dated at Augusta on the 14th, and reciting the substance of the despatch which the operator had that day forwarded. The letter reached Mr. Buchanan on the same day on which it was written.

which information of this despatch reached President Buchanan (February 19th), with what was taking place in Washington at that time, it will appear that the administration could not, while the Peace Congress was still in session, do anything more than to prepare secretly the small expedition under Commander Ward, and hold it in readiness to sail, whenever Major Anderson should signify that he considered his position as insecure. From information which reached the President from other quarters, he was satisfied that the Montgomery Congress would not approve of the taking of Fort Sumter before Mr. Lincoln's inauguration. The great body of the persons composing the Montgomery government were too cool and too wary in their plans to promote, at that time, the hasty and hot-headed schemes of their friends in South Carolina. They were still bent upon procuring the peaceable assent of the Federal Government to the separation of their States from the Union.\*

They did not mean to initiate a war, although most of them saw clearly that there *would be* war, while they denied that there *ought to be* one. At all events, they meant to have it appear to the world that they had done everything they could to procure a peaceable acquiescence in their secession from the Union. Under these circumstances, President Buchanan, who now had less than three weeks of his official term remaining, and who could not anticipate that commissioners of the new Confederacy would reach Washington while he was President (they were not appointed until the 25th of February), could only leave the position of things in regard to Fort Sumter in the best possible attitude for his successor. This attitude was, to hold privately all the means that the Government then had for relieving Fort Sumter, in readiness, to be used by his successor as circumstances might require.

In the mean time, as the 4th of March was drawing near, Mr. Lincoln, the President-elect, was making his journey from Springfield towards Washington, delivering public speeches on the way, the tenor of which was that retaining the forts and other property of the United States in the seceded States was

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\* On the 15th of February, the Montgomery Congress provided for the appointment by their President-elect of three commissioners to the Federal Government, for the negotiation and settlement of a peaceful separation.

not coercion, that there need be no war, and that there was no occasion for any alarm, as "nobody was hurt." From these strange utterances of Mr. Lincoln, as he approached the capital, the only inference that could be drawn was that he considered the country to be in no danger, and that there would be no occasion to use force. It has been claimed, and not without some reason, that Mr. Lincoln's speeches on this journey encouraged the secessionists to believe that they could negotiate a peaceable and final separation of their States from the Union. But at all events, Mr. Lincoln's travelling speeches justified the course that had been pursued by Mr. Buchanan; for Mr. Lincoln's attitude as the incoming President was that the use of force must be confined to the preservation of the property of the United States in the seceded States, against all attempts to forcibly dispossess the Federal Government. How the war was precipitated, after Mr. Lincoln's inauguration, is a distinct topic. On the day of his inauguration, he was perfectly at liberty, so far as depended upon anything done or forbore by his predecessor, to refuse all communication with the Montgomery commissioners, and to use all the means that his predecessor had ever had for reinforcing Fort Sumter. He was doubtless surprised, as his predecessor was, by being informed on the 5th day of March, that Fort Sumter could not be held without a force of fifteen or twenty thousand men, to destroy the batteries that had been erected around it; and had the Congress, which expired on the day of his inauguration, made the provisions for the emergency which Mr. Buchanan urged upon them, no member of Mr. Lincoln's administration would have had any occasion to temporize with the Southern commissioners in any form, concerning the retention of that fortress.

And here it may be well to recapitulate distinctly what President Buchanan urged Congress to do and what it neglected to do. He has himself so clearly stated this, that I cannot do better than to quote his words:

We have already seen that Congress, throughout the entire session, refused to adopt any measures of compromise to prevent civil war, or to retain first the cotton or afterwards the border States within the Union. Failing to do this, and whilst witnessing the secession of one after another of the cotton States, the withdrawal of their Senators and Representatives, and the forma-



tion of their Confederacy, it was the imperative duty of Congress to furnish the President or his successor the means of repelling force by force, should this become necessary, to preserve the Union. They, nevertheless, refused to perform this duty, with as much pertinacity as they had manifested in repudiating all measures of compromise.

1. At the meeting of Congress, a Federal Judiciary had ceased to exist in South Carolina. The District Judge, the District Attorney, and the United States Marshal had resigned their offices. These ministers of justice had all deserted their posts before the act of secession, and the laws of the United States could no longer be enforced through their agency. We have already seen that the President, in his message, called the attention of Congress to this subject, but no attempt was made in either House to provide a remedy for the evil.

2. Congress positively refused to pass a law conferring on the President authority to call forth the militia, or accept the services of volunteers, to suppress insurrections which might occur in any State against the Government of the United States. It may appear strange that this power had not long since been vested in the Executive. The Act of February 28, 1795,\* the only law applicable to the subject, provides alone for calling forth the militia to suppress insurrections against State governments, without making any similar provision for suppressing insurrections against the Government of the United States. If anything were required beyond a mere inspection of the act to render this clear, it may be found in the opinion of Attorney General Black, of the 20th November, 1860. Indeed, it is a plain *casus omissus*. This palpable omission, which ought to have been instantly supplied, was suffered to continue until after the end of Mr. Buchanan's administration, when on the 29th July, 1861, Congress conferred this necessary power on the President.† The framers of the Act of 1795 either did not anticipate an insurrection within any State against the Federal Government, or if they did, they purposely abstained from providing for it. Even in regard to insurrections against a State government, so jealous were they of any interference on the part of the Federal Government with the rights of the States, that they withheld from Congress the power to protect any State "against domestic violence," except "on the application of the Legislature, or of the Executive (when the Legislature cannot be convened)." Under the Act of 1795, therefore, the President is precluded from acting, even upon his own personal and absolute knowledge of the existence of such an insurrection. Before he can call forth the militia for its suppression, he must first be applied to for this purpose by the appropriate State authorities, in the manner prescribed by the Constitution. It was the duty of Congress, immediately after their meeting, to supply this defect in our laws, and to confer an absolute authority on the President to call forth the militia, and accept the services of volunteers, to suppress insurrections against the United States, whenever or wherever they might occur. This was a precautionary measure which, independently of existing dangers,

\* 1 Stat. at Large, p. 424.

† 12 U. S. Stat. at Large, p. 281.

ought long since to have formed a part of our permanent legislation. But no attempt was ever made in Congress to adopt it until after the President's special message of the 8th January, 1861, and then the attempt entirely failed. Meanwhile the aspect of public affairs had become more and more threatening. Mr. Crittenden's amendment had been defeated before the Committee of Thirteen, on the last day of December; and it was also highly probable that his proposition before the Senate to refer it to a vote of the people of the States, would share the same fate. South Carolina and Florida had already seceded, and the other cotton States had called conventions for the purpose of seceding. Nay, more, several of them had already seized the forts, magazines, and arsenals within their limits. Still all this failed to produce any effect upon Congress. It was at this crisis the President sent his special message to Congress (8th January, 1861), by which he endeavored to impress them with the necessity for immediate action. He concealed nothing from them. Whilst still clinging to the fading hope that they might yet provide for a peaceful adjustment of our difficulties, and strongly recommending this course, he says: "Even now the danger is upon us. In several of the States which have not yet seceded, the forts, arsenals, and magazines of the United States have been seized. This is by far the most serious step which has been taken since the commencement of the troubles. . . . The seizure of this property, from all appearances, has been purely aggressive, and not in resistance to any attempt to coerce a State or States to remain in the Union." He also stated the well-known fact that our small army was on the remote frontiers, and was scarcely sufficient to guard the inhabitants against Indian incursions, and consequently our forts were without sufficient garrisons.

Under these circumstances he appeals to Congress in the following language: "But the dangerous and hostile attitude of the States toward each other has already far transcended and cast in the shade the ordinary executive duties already provided for by law, and has assumed such vast and alarming proportions as to place the subject entirely above and beyond executive control. The fact cannot be disguised that we are in the midst of a great revolution. In all its great bearings, therefore, I commend the question to Congress, as the only human tribunal, under Providence, possessing the power to declare war, or to authorize the employment of military force in all cases contemplated by the Constitution; and they alone possess the power to remove grievances which might lead to war, and to secure peace and union to this distracted country. On them, and on them alone, rests the responsibility."

Congress might, had they thought proper, have regarded the forcible seizure of these forts and other property, including that of the Branch Mint at New Orleans, with all the treasure it contained, as the commencement of an aggressive war. Beyond question the cotton States had now committed acts of open hostility against the Federal Government. They had always contended that secession was a peaceful constitutional remedy, and that Congress had no power to make war against a sovereign State for the purpose of coercing her to remain in the Union. They could no longer shelter themselves

under this plea. They had by their violent action entirely changed the position they had assumed; and instead of peacefully awaiting the decision of Congress on the question of coercion, they had themselves become the coercionists and assailants. This question had, therefore, passed away. No person has ever doubted the right or the duty of Congress to pass laws enabling the President to defend the Union against armed rebellion. Congress, however, still shrunk from the responsibility of passing any such laws. This might have been commendable had it proceeded from a sincere desire not to interpose obstacles to a compromise intended to prevent the effusion of fraternal blood and restore the Union. Still, in any event, the time had arrived when it was their duty to make at the least contingent provisions for the prosecution of the war, should this be rendered inevitable. This had become the more necessary as Congress would soon expire, and the new Congress could not be convened for a considerable period after the old one had ceased to exist, because a large portion of the Representatives had not then been elected. These reasons, however, produced no effect.

The President's special message\* was referred, two days after its date (10th January), by the House of Representatives to a special committee, of which Mr. Howard, of Michigan, was chairman. Nothing was heard from this committee for the space of twenty days. They then, on the 30th January, through Mr. John H. Reynolds, of New York, one of its members, reported a bill† enabling the President to call forth the militia or to accept the services of volunteers for the purpose of protecting the forts, magazines, arsenals, and other property of the United States, and to "recover possession" of such of these as "have been or may hereafter be unlawfully seized or taken possession of by any combination of persons whatever." Had this bill become a law, it would have been the duty of the President at once to raise a volunteer or militia force to recapture the forts which had been already seized. But Congress was not then prepared to assume such a responsibility. Mr. Reynolds accordingly withdrew his bill from the consideration of the House on the very day it was reported. On his own motion it was recommitted, and thus killed as soon as it saw the light. It was never heard of more.

Then, after another pause of nineteen days, and only a fortnight before the close of the session, the Committee on Military Affairs, through Mr. Stanton, of Ohio, their chairman, on the 18th February reported another bill‡ on the subject, but of a more limited character than that which had been withdrawn. It is remarkable that it contains no provision touching the recovery of the forts and other property which had been already seized by the delinquent States. It did no more than provide that the powers already possessed by the President, under the Act of 1795, to employ the militia in suppressing insurrections against a State government, should be "extended to the case of insurrections against the authority of the United States," with the additional

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\* *Cong. Globe*, p. 316.

† *Ibid.*, p. 645, bills of H. R., No. 698.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 1001, bill 1003, H. R.

authority to "accept the services of such volunteers as may offer their services for the purpose mentioned." Thus all hostile action for the recovery of the forts already seized was excluded from the bill. It is difficult to conceive what reasonable objection could be made to this bill, except that it did not go far enough and embrace the forts already seized; and more especially as when it was reported we may recollect that the Confederate Congress had already been ten days in session at Montgomery, Alabama, and had adopted a Provisional Constitution. Notwithstanding all this, the House refused to act upon it. The bill was discussed on several occasions until Tuesday, 26th February. On that day a motion was made by Mr. Corwin, of Ohio, to postpone its consideration until Thursday, the 28th February.\* Mr. Stanton, the reporter of the bill, resisted this motion, stating that such a postponement would be fatal to it. "It will," said he, "be impossible after that to have it passed by the Senate" (before the 4th March). He, therefore, demanded the ayes and noes; and notwithstanding his warning, Mr. Corwin's motion prevailed by a vote of 100 to 74, and thus the bill was defeated.

It may be proper to observe that Mr. Corwin, whose motion killed the bill, was a confidential friend of the President elect, then present in Washington, and was soon thereafter appointed minister to Mexico.

But even had Congress passed this bill, it would have proved wholly inefficient for want of an appropriation to carry it into effect. The Treasury was empty; but had it been full, the President could not have drawn from it any, even the most trifling sum, without a previous appropriation by law. The union of the purse with the sword, in the hands of the Executive, is wholly inconsistent with the idea of a free government. The power of the legislative branch to withhold money from the Executive, and thus restrain him from dangerous projects of his own, is a necessary safeguard of liberty. This exists in every government pretending to be free. Hence our Constitution has declared that "no money shall be drawn from the Treasury but in consequence of appropriations made by law." It is, therefore, apparent that even if this bill had become a law, it could not have been carried into effect by the President without a direct violation of the Constitution.

Notwithstanding these insuperable obstacles, no member of either House, throughout the entire session, ever even proposed to raise or appropriate a single dollar for the defence of the Government against armed rebellion. Congress not only refused to grant the President the authority and force necessary to suppress insurrections against the United States, but the Senate, by refusing to confirm his nomination of a collector of the customs for the port of Charleston, effectually tied his hands and rendered it impossible for him to collect the revenue within that port. In his annual message he expressed the opinion that "the same insuperable obstacles do not lie in the way of executing the [existing] laws for the collection of customs on the seaboard of South Carolina as had been interposed to prevent the administration of justice under

the Federal authority within the interior of that State." At all events he had determined to make the effort with the naval force under his command. He trusted that this might be accomplished without collision; but if resisted, then the force necessary to attain the object must be applied. Accordingly, whilst informing Congress "that the revenue still continues to be collected as heretofore at the custom house in Charleston," he says that "should the collector unfortunately resign, a successor may be appointed to perform this duty." The collector (William F. Colcock) continued faithfully to perform his duties until some days after the State had seceded, when at the end of December he resigned. The President, immediately afterwards, on the 2d January, nominated to the Senate, as his successor, Mr. Peter McIntire, of Pennsylvania, a gentleman well qualified for the office. The selection could not have been made from South Carolina, because no citizen of that State would have accepted the appointment. The Senate, throughout their entire session, never acted upon the nomination of Mr. McIntire; and without a collector of customs duly appointed, it was rendered impossible for the President, under any law in existence, to collect the revenue.

But even if the Senate had confirmed Mr. McIntire's nomination, it is extremely doubtful whether the President could lawfully have collected the revenue against the forcible resistance of the State, unless Congress had conferred additional powers upon him. For this purpose Mr. Bingham, of Ohio, on the 3d January, 1861,\* the day after Mr. McIntire's nomination to the Senate, reported a bill from the Judiciary Committee, further to provide for the collection of duties on imports. This bill embraced substantially the same provisions, long since expired, contained in the Act of 2d March, 1833, commonly called "the Force Bill," to enable General Jackson to collect the revenue outside of Charleston, "either upon land or on board any vessel." Mr. Bingham's bill was permitted to slumber on the files of the House until the 2d March, the last day but one before Congress expired,† when he moved for a suspension of the rules, to enable the House to take it up and consider it, but his motion proved unsuccessful. Indeed, the motion was not made until so late an hour of the session that even if it had prevailed, the bill could not have passed both Houses before the final adjournment. Thus the President was left both without a collector of customs, and most probably without any law which a collector could have carried into effect, had such an officer existed. Mr. Bingham's bill shared the fate of all other legislative measures, of whatever character, intended either to prevent or to confront the existing danger. From the persistent refusal to pass any act enabling either the outgoing or the incoming administration to meet the contingency of civil war, it may fairly be inferred that the friends of Mr. Lincoln, in and out of Congress, believed he would be able to settle the existing difficulties with the cotton States in a peaceful manner, and that he might be embarrassed by any legislation contemplating the necessity of a resort to hostile measures.

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\* *Cong. Globe*, p. 236, bills H. R., No. 910.

† *H Journal*, p. 465.

The 36th Congress expired on the 3d March, 1861, leaving the law just as they found it. They made no provision whatever for the suppression of threatened rebellion, but deliberately refused to grant either men or money for this purpose. It was this violation of duty which compelled President Lincoln to issue a proclamation convening the new Congress, in special session, immediately after the attack on Fort Sumter.\*

It is proper to state that President Lincoln did not accord to the Montgomery Commissioners any official reception as representatives of an independent government. But as will hereafter appear, his Secretary of State, Mr. Seward, through the intervention of distinguished persons in Washington, held much informal intercourse with them in regard to the evacuation of Fort Sumter, the result of which was that the commissioners left Washington believing, or professing to believe, that they had been duped by a promise to withdraw the troops, which had not been fulfilled, but, on the contrary, that secret preparations were making by Mr. Lincoln's government to send reinforcements. This has always been assigned as the excuse for the attack on Fort Sumter.†

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\* Buchanan's Defence, p. 153, *et seq.*

† In the 1st vol. of Mr. Jefferson Davis's work, "Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government," will be found a full statement of the Confederate side of the story relative to the intercourse between the commissioners and Mr. Seward. I refer to it without either assent or dissent, as it is not my province to examine the truth or falsity of the charge made against the Lincoln administration. It will be seen from the letters written by Mr. Stanton to Mr. Buchanan during March and the early part of April (quoted *post*), what opinion Mr. Stanton formed from all the information that he could obtain, respecting the course of the new administration.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

1861—February and March.

COMMISSIONERS FROM THE CONFEDERATE GOVERNMENT—MR. JEFFERSON DAVIS'S STATEMENT THAT THEY WERE INVITED BY PRESIDENT BUCHANAN CALLED IN QUESTION.

IT is now my duty to examine a statement made by Mr. Jefferson Davis in his recent work, to the effect that Confederate commissioners were appointed and sent to Washington from Montgomery, partly, at least, in consequence of a suggestion made to him by President Buchanan. The statement is in these words : " It may here be mentioned, in explanation of my desire that the commission, or at least a part of it, should reach Washington before the close of Mr. Buchanan's term, that I had received an intimation from him, through a distinguished Senator of one of the border States,\* that he would be happy to receive a commissioner or commissioners from the Confederate States, and would refer to the Senate any communication that might be made through such a commission."†

This intimation, if it was ever made, was, as Mr. Davis describes it, that the President would himself receive a diplomatic agent or agents from the Confederate States, and would, as is the customary and constitutional course on extraordinary occasions, consult the Senate, not Congress, upon any communication that such agent or agents might desire to make. Mr. Davis, although he names Mr. Hunter, of Virginia, as the person through whom he received this intimation, quotes no letter or telegram from that gentleman ; so that a judgment cannot be formed upon the character of this alleged intimation. There

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\* Mr. Hunter, of Virginia.

† Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government, vol. i., p. 264.

is not the least trace among Mr. Buchanan's private papers of his ever having made to Mr. Hunter such a suggestion in writing. If it was made orally—considering his habit of keeping memoranda of important conversations, especially with the Southern Senators—it is highly probable that he would not have omitted to record this one. No such memorandum has been found after the most diligent search. One is left, therefore, to the probabilities of the case, which are all against the correctness of Mr. Davis' statement. No imputation is here made upon Mr. Davis' veracity; but it evidently requires something more in the nature of proof than anything he has given, to justify the belief that President Buchanan ever expressed his willingness to receive commissioners from the Confederate States, to negotiate with the diplomatic department of the Government for a peaceable acknowledgment of the independence of those States. The mere reception of such commissioners and a reference of their communication to the Senate, would have been tantamount to an admission that the Confederate government could be treated with as an independent power.

1. In the letter addressed by Mr. Davis to the President, dated on the 27th of February, 1861, and which he describes in his book as "of a personal and semi-official character," introducing Mr. Crawford, the first commissioner to arrive in Washington, and asking for him "a favorable reception corresponding to his station," he did not in any manner signify that he was sending Mr. Crawford to Washington in compliance with an intimation which he, Mr. Davis, had received from Mr. Buchanan. This he would naturally have said, in such a personal letter, if he at that time was acting upon such an intimation from Mr. Buchanan, because it would have been an unanswerable ground on which to ask for a favorable reception of the commissioner. The appeal *ad hominem* would not have been left out of such a letter.

2. Mr. Davis was well aware that President Buchanan had steadily refused to accord any diplomatic or official character to the South Carolina commissioners, as representatives of a foreign or independent power, and that he had conferred with them only as private and eminent citizens of their State. Mr. Davis was also aware that the President had never offered to entertain,



and had never entertained, a proposition to refer to any other body than Congress, the question of the standing of any seceded State. He had acted in the same way towards Colonel Hayne, when he came from Governor Pickens to demand the surrender of Fort Sumter; and again, early in February, when the Hon. Thomas J. Judge presented himself as a commissioner from the seceded State of Alabama, the President, as Mr. Davis doubtless knew, refused to receive him in any capacity but that of a distinguished citizen of Alabama, referring to his several previous messages to Congress as proof that he could not recognize Mr. Judge in the character which he claimed. All this had transpired a good while before Mr. Davis sent Mr. Crawford to Washington. On the other hand, ex-President Tyler had been received by the President as a commissioner from the State of Virginia, which had not seceded, and did not then propose and was not likely to secede from the Union. Yet, the world is asked to believe that President Buchanan, through a third person, sent an intimation to the President of the Confederate States, that he would be happy to receive a diplomatic agent of that government, and would consult the Senate upon what that agent had to propose.

3. The date of Mr. Crawford's departure from Montgomery, "on or about February 27th," the date of his arrival in Washington, "two or three days before the expiration of Mr. Buchanan's term of office," and the fact that Mr. Buchanan declined to receive him or to send any message to the Senate touching the subject of his mission, militate strongly against the correctness of the assertion that he went there in consequence of an intimation from Mr. Buchanan that such an agent would be received. If such an intimation had been given, the President could have had no excuse for refusing to hold any communication with the agent, even if he did not arrive until the last two or three days of the administration.

4. Mr. Crawford, in a manuscript account which he furnished to Mr. Davis of his "recollections of events connected with" his mission, represents Mr. Buchanan as "panic-stricken;" in "a state of most thorough alarm, not only for his home at Wheatland, but for his personal safety;" that he was "afraid of a public visit" from the commissioner whose appointment he

had himself suggested, and whom he had promised to receive.\* Mr. Crawford is not alone in imputing "panic" to Mr. Buchanan. It was a common mode, both with Mr. Buchanan's Northern and his Southern enemies, to represent him as bewildered, confused, timorous, not only during the last days, but during the last months of his administration. This was their way of accounting for conduct which, for very opposite reasons, they disliked. It has been my duty, in investigating day by day every act of his official and private life during this period, to penetrate into his closet, if I may so express myself, and to form an opinion respecting the effect upon him of the great and critical events with which he had to deal. The materials for such an opinion, when one has access to the written evidence of what such a statesman was doing from day to day and from hour to hour, are almost as ample as if one had all the while been at his side and sate at his board. It seems to me the veriest folly, to speak of a man as panic-stricken or bewildered, who was daily and hourly answering with his own hand the most important public despatches, and the most familiar private letters, in the manner appropriate to each; recording with his own pen important conversations; holding cabinet councils; giving directions and transacting with punctuality and order the multifarious business of a great office; attending to his own private concerns, and grasping firmly the helm of state amid waves that rose higher and were more dangerous than any through which the good ship had ever floated; entertaining friends, enjoying the delights of social intercourse, writing at one time the gravest and most important messages to Congress, and then congratulating a young lady friend on her approaching marriage, in as graceful and charming a little note as a woman ever received. I cannot give to the reader an adequate idea of what I have gone through, in the study of these last four months of Mr. Buchanan's official life. I can only say that on me it has produced the impression of great versatility of powers, immense industry, complete self-command, unshaken firmness, and undeviating consistency. That a man of nearly seventy years should have encountered, as he did,

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\* As Mr. Crawford had no interview with President Buchanan, he could have had none but hearsay evidence of Mr. Buchanan's state of mind.

what he had to encounter, with so little sign of fear, is the best proof of an undaunted temper and a serene self-possession. The gossip of Pennsylvania Avenue, and the tattle of secession circles, supposed him to be panic-stricken; while he sate in the White House the most remarkable instance, in those tumultuous times, of the *mens aequa in arduis*.\*

It seems to be quite evident from Mr. Tyler's note of February 24th, to the President, that so far as any suggestion of a commission to be sent by Mr. Davis to Washington proceeded from that city, it proceeded from Mr. Tyler himself, and those gentlemen of his own State who, acting with him, were endeavoring to ward off any attack upon Fort Sumter. Mr. Davis became President of the Confederate States on the 18th of February. But before that date, Mr. Tyler was actively engaged in efforts to prevent an armed collision at Charleston; and as it was well known that Mr. Davis would be the President of the new confederacy whose delegates had assembled at Montgomery, Mr. Tyler and the other Virginians looked to him to prevent any outbreak in South Carolina. But I know of nothing that can connect Mr. Buchanan with the suggestion of a commission, beyond Mr. Davis's statement, which is wholly unsupported by proof. The fair inference from all that occurred is, that the commission was sent to Washington to take the chances of being received by the out-going or the incoming administration, as circumstances might admit. As the first commissioner did not leave Montgomery until the 27th of February, it could not have been expected that Mr. Buchanan would take the responsibility of binding his successor by negotiating with a diplomatic agent of the Confederate States during the last three days of his administration; nor is it

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\* I have had occasion heretofore to speak of the multitudes of letters received by the President from all quarters of the country, after the promulgation of his annual message of December 3d. The inundation was scarcely less during the months of January and February; and as a general rule, when an answer was necessary or expedient, he made the original draft of it himself. In almost all cases, he noted on the back of letters or other papers which he received, the name of the writer, the date, and the date of the answer. But was he wasting his energies, it may be asked, in the duties of a mere clerk? Turn to his messages; consider the almost daily cabinet consultations, and the incessant attention which he had to give to the state of things in the South, the proceedings of Congress, the condition of public opinion in the North, and the deliberations of the Peace Convention, as well as to the ordinary business of the Government.

probable that Mr. Davis, whose last words in the Senate of the United States arraigned Mr. Buchanan severely for his course towards South Carolina, had, as President of the Confederate States, received from Mr. Buchanan an intimation that was equivalent to an invitation from one potentate to another to send a commission for the adjustment of all differences between their two governments.

"He is advised to send a commission," said Mr. Tyler to Mr. Buchanan. Advised by whom? "By me, Mr. Tyler, and those Virginians who are acting with me," is plainly to be read between the lines of Mr. Tyler's letter of February 24th to the President. No one can doubt that Mr. Buchanan's account of his administration, published in 1866, was written with perfect candor. If he had ever sent to Mr. Davis the intimation which that gentleman says he received from him through a third person, inviting commissioners from the Confederate Government, he would have stated the fact, together with his reasons for it. He never shrank from assigning reasons for any thing that he ever did. Yet not only does he make no allusion to the Montgomery commissioners, but any one who reads his fair and considerate comments on the peace policy pursued by Mr. Lincoln down to the attack on Fort Sumter, ought to be convinced that there was no need for the presence of Confederate commissioners in Washington, coming there on the suggestion of Mr. Buchanan, to negotiate matters that would have to be referred to the Senate, although it is highly probable that Mr. Tyler may have desired that a commissioner be sent to arrange amicably for an agreement by the Confederates not to attack Fort Sumter.

## CHAPTER XXV.

1861—February and March.

TROOPS AT THE CAPITAL—INAUGURATION OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN—IMPORTANT AND ALARMING DESPATCHES FROM MAJOR ANDERSON—MR. HOLT'S COMMUNICATION TO PRESIDENT LINCOLN—ATTITUDE IN WHICH MR. BUCHANAN LEFT THE GOVERNMENT TO HIS SUCCESSOR—HIS DEPARTURE FOR WHEATLAND.

AS the administration was drawing to its end, great uneasiness was felt by many persons in Washington for the safety of the capital and the Government. Rumors of a conspiracy to seize the city and to prevent the inauguration of the President-elect filled the air. Among those who were affected by these rumors was the Secretary of State, Judge Black. With characteristic energy, on the 22d of January, being prevented by illness from attending the cabinet meeting of that day, he addressed to the President a long and earnest private letter, setting forth the grounds of his belief that the existence of such a conspiracy was highly probable, and that at all events, even if it were doubtful, the Government ought to be prepared for the worst. The President, although at first he did not share these apprehensions, was not the less vigilant in the discharge of his executive duties, or the less disposed to give due weight to Judge Black's impressive arguments. He would have had everything needful done in a manner not to excite public observation, if the matter had not been broached in Congress. His message of the 8th of January had been referred on the 10th, in the House of Representatives, to a select committee of five members, consisting of Messrs. Howard, of Michigan, Branch, of North Carolina, Dawes, of Massachusetts, John Cochrane, of New York, and Hickman, of Pennsylvania. On the 25th this committee were instructed, by a resolution offered by Mr. Grow, of Pennsylvania, "to inquire whether any secret

organization hostile to the Government of the United States exists in the District of Columbia; and if so, whether any official or employé of the city of Washington, or any employées or officers of the Federal Government, in the Executive or Judicial Departments, are members of it." Before this committee had reported, steps had been taken by the Executive to assemble quietly at Washington a small body of the regular troops. This at once aroused the jealousy of certain members from the border States. On the 11th of February, a resolution, offered by Mr. Burnett, of Kentucky, was adopted in the House, calling upon the President to furnish to the House, if not incompatible with the public service, "the reasons that have induced him to assemble a large number of troops in this city, why they are kept here, and whether he has any information of a conspiracy on the part of any portion of the citizens of the country to seize the capital and prevent the inauguration of the President-elect."

On the 14th of February the select committee reported all the testimony they had taken, and expressed their unanimous opinion that the evidence produced before them did not prove the existence of a secret organization at Washington, or elsewhere, for purposes hostile to the Government.

Thereupon Mr. Branch, of North Carolina, introduced another resolution, condemning the quartering of troops at the capital.

In the meantime, the Secretary of War, Mr. Holt, on the 18th of February, made a full report to the President, in response to Mr. Burnett's resolution of the 11th, setting forth the reasons for the assembling of the troops, and officially declaring that their presence "is the result of the conclusion arrived at by yourself and cabinet, on the proposition submitted to you by this department." On the 20th, Mr. Holt addressed to the President the following private note:

[MR. HOLT TO THE PRESIDENT.]

WAR DEPARTMENT, Feb. 20, 1861.

DEAR SIR:—

I inclose a copy of the resolution referred to in the paper which I had the honor to address to you on yesterday, and trust I shall be pardoned for saying

that I shall be very unhappy, if this defence—truthful and tempered as it is—is not permitted to reach the country. The act of assembling troops at the capital, and providing for the inauguration of your successor under the shelter of their guns, is one of the gravest and most responsible of your administration. It constitutes, indeed, an epoch in the history of our institutions, and as the circumstances surrounding you fully justify the measure, they should be frankly and fearlessly set forth to the world. For this step your administration has been, and still continues to be, mercilessly denounced, and of this denunciation, as you are aware, a large part has fallen to my share. I have been defamed in my own State, and in the towns of my nearest relatives and friends, and I confess that I have not yet attained to the Christian philosophy of bearing such things as an ox led to the slaughter, without opening my mouth. Congress is now engaged in spreading broadcast over the country, through the efforts of your enemies and mine, a report intended to show that the safety of the capital has never been menaced, and of course that all your preparations here have been prompted by cowardice, or the spirit of despotism. *Now* is the time to meet this calumny. A few weeks hence the memory of the measure assailed will be swallowed up by the heady current of events, and nothing will remain but the wounds to the reputation and sensibilities of your friends who gave to that measure their honest and zealous support. I do not ask you to adopt my report as your own, but to submit it simply as the views entertained by the War Department, and for which its head should alone be held responsible.

The helplessness of my position for all purposes of self-defence, without your kind coöperation, must be my apology for the solicitude expressed.

Very sincerely your friend,

J. HOLT.

The President did not at once concur in Mr. Holt's views of the necessity for making public the reasons which had governed the Executive in ordering the troops to Washington. In a memorandum which now lies before me in his handwriting, he says:

After the Committee of Five had reported all the testimony which could be collected in the case, with their opinion upon the result of it, the President did not deem it necessary to answer Mr. Burnett's resolution. Understanding, however, that he and other members considered it disrespectful to the Union, not to return an answer, he [on the 2d of March] sent a message to the House, in response to the resolution."

This was in ample season to inform everybody that the troops were in Washington to secure a peaceful inauguration of his

successor against all possibility of danger; the imputations cast upon his administration in the meantime were of less immediate consequence. The table given below shows the number of troops present in the city on the 27th of February, and until after the 4th of March.\*

The following is the material part of the special message of March 2, 1861:

These troops were ordered here to act as a *posse comitatus* in strict subordination to the civil authority, for the purpose of preserving peace and order in the City of Washington, should this be necessary before or at the period of the inauguration of the President-elect. I was convinced that I ought to act. The safety of the immense amount of public property in this city, and that of the archives of the Government, in which all the States, and especially the new States in which the public lands are situated, have a deep interest; the peace and order of the city itself and the security of the inauguration of the President-elect, were objects of such vast importance to the whole country, that I could not hesitate to adopt precautionary measures. At the present moment, when all is quiet, it is difficult to realize the state of alarm which prevailed when the troops were first ordered to this city. This almost instantly subsided after the arrival of the first company, and a feeling of comparative peace and security has since existed, both in Washington and throughout the country. Had I refused to adopt this precautionary measure, and evil consequences, which good men at the time apprehended, had followed, I should never have forgiven myself.

Some of these troops were in Washington on the 22d of February. It appears that ex-President Tyler was disturbed by

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\* Regular troops present in the City of Washington, February 27, 1861.

	Officers.	Enlisted men.
Field and Staff.....	4 4	
1st Artillery, Light Battery, I....	4	81
2d Artillery, Light Battery, A.....	4	78
West Point, Light Battery.....	4 12	70 229
1st Artillery, Foot Company, D.....	3	50
2d Artillery, Foot Company, E.....	2	72
2d Artillery, Foot Company, H.....	2	65
2d Artillery, Foot Company, K.....	3	52
Engineer, Sappers, and Miners.....	3 13	81 320
Det. Mtd. Recruits.....	3	81
Recruits attached.....		23
Total.....	32	653

Respectfully submitted for the information of the President,

ADJ. GENL. OFFICE,  
February 28, 1861.

S. COOPER,  
Adj. Genl.



learning that they were to form part of the customary parade on Washington's Birthday. President Buchanan made the following reply to his remonstrance :

[THE PRESIDENT TO MR. TYLER.]

WASHINGTON, February 22, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I find it impossible to prevent two or three companies of the Federal troops here from joining in the procession to-day with the volunteers of the District, without giving serious offence to the tens of thousands of the people who have assembled to witness the parade. The day is the anniversary of Washington's birth—a festive occasion throughout the land—and it has been particularly marked by the House of Representatives. These troops everywhere else join such processions, in honor of the birthday of the Father of his country, and it would be hard to assign a good reason why they should be excluded from this privilege in the capital founded by himself. They are here simply as a *posse comitatus* to aid the civil authority, in case of need. Besides, the programme was published in the *National Intelligencer* of this morning without my knowledge.\*

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

\* The War Department having considered the celebration of this national anniversary by the military arm of the Government as a matter of course.

Among the interesting occurrences of that day, as part of the history of the time, it is now proper to quote a private correspondence between General Dix and Major Anderson.\*

[GENERAL DIX TO MAJOR ANDERSON.]

WASHINGTON, March 4, 1861.

MY DEAR MAJOR:—

I have just come from the inauguration of Mr. Lincoln, and in a day or two more I expect to be relieved from my duties as Secretary of the Treasury and return to my family after my short, but laborious and responsible term of official service. I shall send you, by the same mail which takes this note, my answer to a call made upon me by the House of Representatives for instruction in regard to certain transactions in the extreme Southern States. It discloses a demoralization in all that concerns the faithful discharge of official duty, which, if it had pleased God, I could have wished never to have lived to see. The cowardice and treachery of General Twiggs is more disheartening than all that has transpired since this disgraceful career of disloyalty to the

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\* A copy of this correspondence was sent by General Dix to Mr. Buchanan, after the latter had retired to Wheatland. See *post*.

Government commenced. No man can help feeling that he is himself stained in reputation by this national degradation. I can hardly realize that I am living in the age in which I was born and educated.

In the midst of these evidences of degeneracy—in the face of the humiliating spectacle of base intrigues to overthrow the Government by those who are living upon its bounty, and of a pusillanimous or perfidious surrender of the trusts confided to them, the country turns with a feeling of relief, which you cannot understand, to the noble example of fidelity and courage presented by you and your gallant associates. God knows how ardently I wish you a safe deliverance! But let the issue be what it may, you will connect with your name the fame of historical recollections, with which life itself can enter into no comparison. One of the most grateful of my remembrances will be that I was once your commanding officer. I write in haste, but from the heart, and can only add, may God preserve you and carry you in triumph through the perils of your position! I have never doubted if you were assailed that the honor of the country would be gloriously vindicated, and the disgrace cast upon it by others would be signally rebuked by your courage and constancy.

I am, my dear Major, faithfully your friend,

JOHN A. DIX.

P. S.—It is gratifying to know that your State remains faithful to the Union. My kind regards to Lieutenant Hall.

[MAJOR ANDERSON TO GENERAL DIX.]

FORT SUMTER, S. C., March 7, 1861.

MY DEAR GENERAL:—

Thank you. Many thanks to you for your whole-souled letter of March 4th. One such letter is enough to make amends for a life of trial and of discomfort.

My position is not a very enviable one, but still, when I consider how God has blessed me in every step I have taken here, I have not the least fear of the result. I have written to the Department very fully, and the administration now know my opinion, and the opinion of each individual officer of this command, of the strength of the force necessary for forcing an entrance into this harbor.

You speak of the disgraceful incidents developed in your report to Congress. I had already read some of your correspondence, and was shocked at the developments they made. The faithful historian of the present period will have to present a record which will sadden and surprise. It would seem that a Sirocco charged with treachery, cunning, dishonesty, and bad faith, had tainted the atmosphere of portions of our land; and alas! how many have been prostrated by its blast! I hope that ere long we shall see symptoms of restoration, and that a healthier wind will recover some of those who have given way to the blast. A long life of honest devotion to every duty, moral and social, may cause their course to be forgiven, but it cannot be forgotten.

The South Carolinians are on the *qui vive* to-night; why, we know not. They have four guard boats in the stream, instead of the usual number of late, *two*. I cannot believe, though, that General Beauregard, lately of the Engineer Corps, would make an attack without having given formal notice of his intention to do so. My rule is, though, always to keep a bright lookout. With many thanks, my dear General, for your most kind and welcome letter, I am, as ever, your sincere friend,

ROBERT ANDERSON.

The last day of the administration had now come. Mr. Buchanan was to be relieved of the burthens of office, and they were to be devolved on his successor. On that morning extraordinary despatches from Major Anderson were delivered at the War Department. In Mr. Buchanan's handwriting I find, among his private papers, the following account of what took place concerning this sudden revelation of the position of affairs in the harbor of Charleston :—

Monday, March 4, 1861. The cabinet met at the President's room in the Capitol, to assist me in examining the bills which might be presented to me for approval, between the hours of ten and twelve of that day, when my own term and that of Congress would expire.

Mr. Holt did not attend until after eleven o'clock. At the first opportunity, he informed us that on that morning he had received extraordinary despatches from Major Anderson, saying that without a force of some twenty or thirty thousand men to capture the batteries which had been erected, he could not maintain himself at Fort Sumter, and he [Mr. Holt] intended at once to communicate these despatches to President Lincoln. The cabinet had some conversation on the subject that evening at Mr. Ould's.

Tuesday morning, 5th March, we saw Mr. Holt at the War Department. He there read us what he had written to President Lincoln in communicating these despatches to Mr. Holt, giving his reasons for his astonishment. He referred to his own letter to Major Anderson after he had taken possession of Fort Sumter, offering him reinforcements, and the repeated letters of the Major stating that he felt secure, and finally a letter, after the affair of the Star of the West, stating that he did not desire reinforcements. He concluded by referring to the expedition which had been prepared at New York under the direction of General Scott, to sail at once, in case the Major should be attacked or ask for reinforcements. This was small, consisting of two or three hundred men with provisions.

On Tuesday afternoon, 5th March, Mr. Holt told me he had sent the papers to President Lincoln.

This is the last I have heard of it, from any member of the cabinet or any friend at Washington, up till this day (Saturday morning), 9th March, at half-past ten A.M.

The following is Secretary Holt's letter to President Lincoln :

WAR DEPARTMENT, March 5, 1861.

SIR:—

I have the honor to submit for your consideration several letters with inclosures, received on yesterday from Major Anderson and Captain Foster, of the Corps of Engineers, which are of a most important and unexpected character. Why they were unexpected will appear from the following brief statement:—

"After transferring his forces to Fort Sumter, he [Major Anderson] addressed a letter to this Department, under date of the 31st December, 1860, in which he says: 'Thank God, we are now where the Government may send us additional troops *at its leisure*. To be sure, the uncivil and uncourteous action of the Governor [of South Carolina], in preventing us from purchasing anything in the city, will annoy and inconvenience us somewhat; *still we are safe*.' And after referring to some deficiency in his stores, in the articles of soap and candles, he adds: 'Still we can cheerfully put up with the inconvenience of doing without them for the satisfaction we feel in the knowledge that we can command this harbor *as long as our Government wishes to keep it*.' And again, on the 6th January, he wrote: 'My position will, should there be no treachery among the workmen whom we are compelled to retain for the present, enable me to hold this fort *against any force which can be brought against me*; and it would enable me, in the event of war, to annoy the South Carolinians by preventing them from throwing in supplies into their new posts, except by the aid of the Wash Channel through Stone River.'

"Before the receipt of this communication, the Government, being without information as to his condition, had despatched the *Star of the West* with troops and supplies for Fort Sumter; but the vessel having been fired on from a battery at the entrance to the harbor, returned without having reached her destination.

"On the 16th January, 1861, in replying to Major Anderson's letters of the 31st December and of 6th January, I said: 'Your late despatches, as well as the very intelligent statements of Lieutenant Talbot, have relieved the Government of the apprehensions previously entertained for your safety. In consequence, it is not its purpose at present to reinforce you. The attempt to do so would no doubt be attended by a collision of arms and the effusion of blood—a national calamity, which the President is most anxious to avoid. You will, therefore, report frequently your condition, and the character and activity of the preparations, if any, which may be being made for an attack upon the fort, or for obstructing the Government in any endeavors it may make to strengthen your command. Should your despatches be of a nature too important to be intrusted to the mails, you will convey them by special messenger. Whenever, in your judgment, additional supplies or reinforcements are necessary for your safety or for a successful defence of the fort, you

will at once communicate the fact to this Department, and a prompt and vigorous effort will be made to forward them.'

"Since the date of this letter Major Anderson has regularly and frequently reported the progress of the batteries being constructed around him, and which looked either to the defence of the harbor, or to an attack on his own position; but he has not suggested that these works compromised his safety, nor has he made any request that additional supplies or reinforcements should be sent to him. On the contrary, on the 30th January, 1861, in a letter to this Department, he uses this emphatic language: 'I do hope that no attempt will be made by our friends to throw supplies in; their doing so would do more harm than good.'

"On the 5th February, when referring to the batteries, etc., constructed in his vicinity, he said: 'Even in their present condition, they will make it impossible for any hostile force, other than a large and well-appointed one, to enter this harbor, and the chances are that it will then be at a great sacrifice of life;' and in a postscript he adds: 'Of course, in speaking of forcing an entrance, I do not refer to the little stratagem of a small party slipping in.' This suggestion of a stratagem was well considered in connection with all the information that could be obtained bearing upon it; and in consequence of the vigilance and number of the guard-boats in and outside of the harbor, it was rejected as impracticable.

"In view of these very distinct declarations, and of the earnest desire to avoid a collision as long as possible, it was deemed entirely safe to adhere to the line of policy indicated in my letter of the 16th January, which has been already quoted. In that Major Anderson had been requested to report 'at once,' 'whenever, in his judgment, additional supplies or reinforcements were necessary for his safety or for a successful defence of the fort.' So long, therefore, as he remained silent upon this point, the Government felt that there was no ground for apprehension. Still, as the necessity for action might arise at any moment, an expedition has been quietly prepared and is ready to sail from New York, on a few hours' notice, for transporting troops and supplies to Fort Sumter. This step was taken under the supervision of General Scott, who arranged its details, and who regarded the reinforcements thus provided for as sufficient for the occasion. The expedition, however, is not upon a scale approaching the seemingly extravagant estimates of Major Anderson and Captain Foster, now offered for the first time, and for the disclosures of which the Government was wholly unprepared.

"The declaration now made by the Major that he would not be willing to risk his reputation on an attempt to throw reinforcements into Charleston harbor, and with a view of holding possession of the same, with a force of less than twenty thousand good and well-disciplined men, takes the Department by surprise, as his previous correspondence contained no such intimation.

"I have the honor to be, very respectfully,

"Your obedient servant,

"J. HOLT.

As the question of peace or war was now to turn on what might happen at Fort Sumter, it is incumbent on me to give a brief summary of the position in which Mr. Buchanan left the Government to Mr. Lincoln. It is for some other pen than mine to unravel the dark story in which is involved the true history of the informal negotiations between Mr. Lincoln's administration and the Confederate commissioners, in regard to the evacuation of Fort Sumter; negotiations out of which those commissioners came with the professed belief that they had been tricked, and which were swiftly followed by an order from Montgomery to expel Anderson from that post. It is not for me to sit in judgment on that transaction. I have not the means of penetrating the councils of the Lincoln administration, such as I have had for understanding those of his predecessor. I leave to others to explain the truth or falsity of the accusation which has undertaken to justify the bombardment of Fort Sumter and the initiation of a civil war, in which less than thirty days saw the practical transfer of the Confederate Government from Montgomery to Richmond. But it will not be stepping out of my province, if I now describe the situation in which Mr. Buchanan handed over the Government to his successor.

There was now an actual revolt of six States, having about five millions of inhabitants, free and slave, with an organized provisional government, based on the alleged right of States to secede from the Union. Seven other slaveholding States, having more than thirteen millions of inhabitants, free and slave, still held aloof from the Southern Confederacy, still remained loyal to the Government of the United States, still were represented in the new Congress along with the whole North and the whole West. It had been Mr. Buchanan's policy, from the very first, to save these so-called border States from joining the Southern Confederacy.\* He could not prevent the formation of that Confederacy among the cotton States, without exercising powers which the Constitution had not conferred upon

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\* President Buchanan kept before him all the while a table of the Southern States, with the dates of their several secessions, their populations, resources, and other facts, noted by himself, discriminating the cotton and the border States in separate groups.

him. To make aggressive war upon a State, or its people, in order to prevent it or them from doing an unconstitutional act, or because one had been committed, was clearly not within the constitutional powers of the Executive, even if it was within the constitutional powers of Congress. The question has often been asked, why did Mr. Buchanan suffer State after State to go out of the Union? Why did he not prevent their adoption of ordinances of secession? Why did he not call on the North for volunteers, and put down the rebellion in its first stage? The question is a very inconsiderate one, but it shall be answered. In the first place, Mr. Buchanan had no power to call for volunteers under any existing law, and to make such a call without law, was to step outside of the Constitution, and to look to a future indemnification by Congress. Why he did not take such a step has been explained by him so lucidly and exactly, that I have only to quote his words :

Urgent and dangerous emergencies may have arisen, or may hereafter arise in the history of our country, rendering delay disastrous, such as the bombardment of Fort Sumter by the Confederate government, which would for the moment justify the President in violating the Constitution, by raising a military force without the authority of law, but this only during a recess of Congress. Such extreme cases are a law unto themselves. They must rest upon the principle that it is a lesser evil to usurp, until Congress can be assembled, a power withheld from the Executive, than to suffer the Union to be endangered, either by traitors at home or enemies from abroad. In all such cases, however, it is the President's duty to present to Congress, immediately after their next meeting, the causes which impelled him thus to act, and ask for their approbation; just as, on a like occasion, a British minister would ask Parliament for a bill of indemnity. It would be difficult, however, to conceive of an emergency so extreme as to justify or even excuse a President for thus transcending his constitutional powers whilst Congress, to whom he could make an immediate appeal, was in session. Certainly no such case existed during the administration of the late President. On the contrary, not only was Congress actually in session, but bills were long pending before it for extending his authority in calling forth the militia, for enabling him to accept the services of volunteers, and for the employment of the navy, if necessary, outside of ports of entry for the collection of the revenue, all of which were eventually rejected. Under these circumstances, had the President attempted, of his own mere will, to exercise these high powers, whilst Congress were at the very time deliberating whether to grant them to him or not, he would have made himself justly liable to impeachment. This would have been for the

Executive to set at defiance both the Constitution and the legislative branch of the Government.\*

This paragraph reveals, better than anything else he ever wrote, his character as an American statesman. He was the last of a race of eminent public men who had been bred in a profound reverence for the Constitution and intimate knowledge of it. With his great contemporaries of an earlier period, he may have differed upon the construction of particular powers; he belonged to the school of strict construction, while some of the famous men with whom he had contended in former days were more lax in their interpretations. But on the fundamental questions of the nature of the Union, the authority of the Federal Government, and the means by which it was to enforce its laws, there was no distinction between the school of Jackson and Buchanan and the school of Clay and Webster. Moreover, there was not one of his very eminent Whig antagonists, not even Webster, whose loyalty to the Constitution—loyalty in the truest and most comprehensive sense—the loyalty that will not violate, any more than it will fail to assert, the just authority of such an instrument—was more deep and fervid than Buchanan's. This had been, if one may use such an expression, the ruling passion of his public life, from the time when he knew anything of public affairs. He was not a man of brilliant genius, nor had he ever done any one thing that had made his name illustrious and immortal, as Webster did when he defended the Constitution against the heresy of nullification. But in the course of a long, useful and consistent life, filled with the exercise of talents of a fine order and uniform ability, he had made the Constitution of his country the object of his deepest affection, the constant guide of all his public acts. He was in truth conspicuously and emphatically open to the reproach, if it be a reproach, of regarding the Constitution of the United States with what some have considered as idolatry. This trait in Mr. Buchanan's public character must not be overlooked, when the question is asked to which I am now making an answer. How, in the long distant future, the example of his fidelity to the Constitution contributed to its restoration, after a

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\* Buchanan's Defence, p. 161.



period of turmoil and of more than neglect of its principles, is worthy of reflection.

In the next place, during the time of the formation of the provisional confederacy of the cotton States, not only was Congress in session, and not only did it neglect to do anything to strengthen the hands of the Executive, but if the President had, without the authority of law, issued a call for volunteers, it would not have been responded to. It is true that some Northern legislatures passed resolutions tendering men and money to the United States. But how could such offers have been accepted and acted upon by the Executive, without the authority of law? How could a regiment, or an army of regiments, have been marched by the President into Georgia or Mississippi, to prevent the adoption of a secession ordinance? What but a declaration of war, made by the only war-making power, would have protected officers and men from being in the condition of trespassers and brigands, from the moment they set foot on the soil of a Southern State on such an enterprise? War, war upon a State or a people, must have a legal basis, if those who wage it are to be entitled to the privileges and immunities of soldiers. On the other hand, to enforce the laws of the United States against obstructions put in the way of their execution by individuals or unlawful combinations, was not to make war. But for this purpose, President Buchanan could not obtain from Congress the necessary means. Moreover, the public mind of the North was at that time intent upon the measures by which it was hoped that all differences between the two sections of the Union might be composed, and a call for volunteers would have been regarded as fatal to any prospect of adjustment, and would therefore have been little heeded. It required all the excitement which followed the bombardment of Fort Sumter, all the monstrous uprising of the North produced by that event, to secure a response to President Lincoln's irregular call for seventy-five thousand men, in April, 1861.

But it was in the power of President Buchanan to hold the border States back from the secession movement until his successor could take the reins of Government, and this duty he successfully performed. Notwithstanding the failure of Congress to second his efforts to preserve the Union unbroken by

anything but the secession of South Carolina; notwithstanding the failure of the Peace Convention to propose anything that Congress would accept, Virginia, North Carolina, Maryland, Kentucky, even Tennessee and Missouri, had not seceded, or taken steps to secede, on the 4th of March, 1861. The same conservative sentiment which still animated the best portion of the people of those States, kept them from the vortex of secession. They did not yet regard the election of Mr. Lincoln by a purely sectional vote of the non-slaveholding States as a sufficient cause for breaking up the Union. They still looked to his administration for measures that would prevent a civil war; still looked to the Federal Government for a redress of all the grievances of which any of the States could complain. So that when Mr. Buchanan laid down and Mr. Lincoln took up the powers of the Executive, the problem which remained for the latter, and which Mr. Buchanan left for him in the best attitude that it could be made to assume, was how still to keep those border States from joining the Southern Confederacy, as they had been kept from it hitherto.

This was largely, almost exclusively, a matter for the Executive, unless, indeed, he should think it best to call the new Congress, then legally existing, together immediately, and insist on its doing what the preceding Congress had neglected. This course was not at once adopted, and consequently everything depended upon the dealing of the Executive with the Confederate commissioners, who were then in Washington, respecting the evacuation of Fort Sumter. Mr. Buchanan had in no way trammelled his successor by negotiations with those commissioners. He had, in fact, declined all intercourse with them; and it was entirely optional with Mr. Lincoln to do the same thing, as it was entirely open to him to determine whether he would or would not order the evacuation of that fort, and to shape his measures accordingly. Thus far, an attack upon Major Anderson's position had been prevented by the efforts of Virginia, and by the prudent course pursued by Mr. Buchanan. It was to be expected that the Southern commissioners would be most persistent in their demands; that they would seek the aid of influential persons who might desire to see the peace of the country preserved, and who would be willing to hazard so

much of a recognition of the new Confederacy as a *de facto* power, as would be involved in a compliance with its immediate demands respecting Sumter. But by no act, or word, or omission of the outgoing President, had his successor been placed under any obligation to yield to those demands, or even to consider them. That the military situation had become such that Anderson could not be maintained in his position without sending a considerable army to his relief, was not due to President Buchanan's unwillingness to send him reinforcements, but it was a consequence of Anderson's not asking for them until he was so surrounded with fortifications and powerful batteries that he could not be relieved without a force many times greater than all that the Government then had at its command.

Mr. Lincoln, therefore, assumed the Government without a single admission by his predecessor of the right of secession, or of any claim founded on it; without any obligation, other than the duty of preventing a civil war, to hold even an informal negotiation with the Confederate commissioners; with thirteen millions of people in the border States still in the Union, and not likely to leave it, unless blood should be shed. It may be that in one sense it was fortunate that the first gun was fired on and not from Fort Sumter. But into that question it is not needful for me to enter. My province is fulfilled, if I have correctly described the condition in which Mr. Buchanan left the Government to his successor.

Excepting on the short drive from the White House to the Capitol, in the same carriage, on the 4th day of March, according to the graceful custom of inaugurating a new President, and in the public ceremony of the day, there is no reason to suppose that Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Lincoln ever met. All that is known is that Mr. Lincoln's demeanor, while in the carriage, produced upon Mr. Buchanan the impression that he had no fears for his personal safety or the safety of the capital. But it does not appear that at that or any other time, Mr. Lincoln sought to know what his predecessor could tell him. It is too much the habit of our public men to live and act and confer only with their party associates. Unless it be in the conflicts of public debate, they learn nothing of the views, purposes, motives, and very little of the acts, of their political opponents.

If ever there was an occasion when this habit needed to be broken, it was when one of these men was putting off and the other was assuming the great duties of the Presidency. Mr. Buchanan could not seek a conference with his successor on the state of public affairs; his successor did not seek or apparently desire one. How much there was that Mr. Buchanan could have communicated to Mr. Lincoln, and how much it concerned the interest of the Republic that the latter should learn, must be apparent from what has been gone over in the preceding pages. Such a conference, if it had served no other good purpose, would have fixed Mr. Lincoln's attention upon the extreme importance of so guiding the intercourse between his administration, or any member of it, and the Confederate commissioners, as to prevent all pretext for an assault upon Fort Sumter.

Mr. Buchanan was detained by his private affairs in Washington until the 9th day of March. On that day, he departed for Wheatland, accompanied by Miss Lane and the other members of his household.

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#### TROOPS AT THE CAPITAL.

The anonymous diarist of the *North American Review*, writing on the 4th day of March, the day of Mr. Lincoln's inauguration, records his great disgust at the presence of troops in Washington, and attributes it to "the mischievous influence of the Blairs." It is to be hoped that the statement which I have made will be considered as sufficient proof of the source from which the first suggestion of this very prudent and proper precaution came. There was no single moment of time and no place in the Union, during the whole period of Mr. Buchanan's Presidency, at which the presence of a military force was more necessary than it was at Washington on the day of Mr. Lincoln's inauguration; for, notwithstanding the absence of any tangible evidence of a conspiracy to seize the city or to interrupt the proceedings, yet, as Judge Black forcibly remarked in his letter to the President, preparation could do no possible harm, in any event, and in the event which seemed most probable, it was the country's only chance of salvation. If, then, at this most critical time and place, there could be assembled only 633 men of the rank and file of the army, a part of them being the sappers and miners drawn from West Point, what a commentary does this fact afford, upon the charge that President Buchanan neglected his duty, by not garrisoning the Southern forts in the month of October, 1860. At that time, the whole number of seaboard forts of the United States was 57; the proper complement for war garrisons of these forts would require 26,420 men; and their actual garrisons were 1,334 men, 1,308 of whom were at Governor's Island, New York, Fort McHenry, Maryland, Fortress Monroe, Virginia, and Alcatraz Island, San Francisco. The regular army, when recruited to its maximum, was only 18,000 men; actually it was not much over 16,000. At no time could any part of it have been withdrawn from the remote frontiers; and of the 1,308 men distributed at the five points above named, very few could have been transferred to the nine Southern forts mentioned by General Scott in his "views" of October, 1860. The Military Committee of the House of Representatives, in their Report of February 18, 1861, said: "Unless it is the intention of Congress that the forts, arsenals, dock yards and other public property, shall be exposed to capture and spoliation by any lawless bands who may have the inclination to commit depredations upon it, the President must be armed with additional force for their protection." Accordingly, they reported a bill authorizing the President to call out the militia, but it was never acted upon. (See Report, H. R. No. 85, 36th Cong., 2d Session, and Bill No. 1,003.)

## CHAPTER XXVI.

1861.

JOURNEY FROM WASHINGTON TO WHEATLAND—WELCOME FROM FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS—THE RANCOR OF THE TIMES MAKES REFUTATION A DUTY OF THE AUTHOR—THE STORY OF THE "CABINET SCENE"—MR. SEWARD'S CHARGE AGAINST THE LATE ADMINISTRATION—PICTURES AND CURIOSITIES SAID TO HAVE BEEN CARRIED AWAY FROM THE WHITE HOUSE—MISS LANE AND THE ALMANACH DE GOTH—PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS AT WHEATLAND INVENTED AND PUT INTO THE MOUTH OF MR. BUCHANAN AND HIS GUESTS.

AT my request, a citizen of Lancaster, Mr. W. U. Hensel, has furnished for this work the following account of Mr. Buchanan's journey from Washington to Wheatland:

Local pride and personal admiration for Mr. Buchanan had always contributed to his strength at home in popular contests. In the County of Lancaster, which to this day remains one of the strongholds of the anti-Democratic party, Mr. Buchanan received 8731 votes to 6608 for Fremont and 3615 for Fillmore. In the city the utmost hopes of his friends were more than realized by a plurality of 1196, about four times the usual Democratic majority, and a majority over Fillmore and Fremont of 864. In the little township of Lancaster, on the outskirts of the city, in which Mr. Buchanan's suburban home was situated, and which the *New York Herald* called "The Wheatland district," the average opposition majority of sixty was reduced to four. The interest and affection with which he was regarded at home was testified by the escort of an immense body of citizens of all parties which accompanied him from his house to the railroad station, when he left for Washington on March 2, 1857. The whole population of the city and vicinity seemed to have turned out upon the occasion, and the severity of the weather did not chill their enthusiasm. His immediate escort to the capital consisted of the local military company, the Fencibles, committees of council, representatives of Franklin and Marshall College, of the board of trustees of which institution he was president, and a number of personal friends.

On his expected return to Wheatland, after the close of his term, a citizens' meeting appointed a committee of his neighbors and friends to escort him on

his way. When those gentlemen arrived in Washington and, through their chairman, Hon. H. M. North, acquainted the President with their mission, he was deeply moved by the manifestation of good feeling toward him. A small military escort accompanied him and his friends to the railroad station in Washington, en route for Lancaster. They stopped over in Baltimore, and during the evening the ex-President received a large number of its citizens. In response to a serenade given him about eleven o'clock in the evening, at Barnum's Hotel, he spoke as follows :

"MY FRIENDS :—

"I thank you most cordially for this honor, and a long period of time must elapse before memory shall fail to record it. The music is admirable indeed, and the delicious strains cannot fail to gratify the taste of any person whose genius or talents lead him to such a high accomplishment. But the music is nothing at all compared to the motives and feelings which prompted the compliment. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your kind sentiments therein expressed.

"There are some who are ever ready to pay homage to those who are about entering upon the cares of office, influenced doubtless by a principle of self-aggrandizement; but you pay your attentions to an old man going out of office, and now on his way to a retired and peaceful home. For many years I have experienced a deep regard for the interests of Baltimore, have rejoiced in her prosperity, and sympathized in her temporary misfortunes; and now one of the strongest feelings of my heart is, that she may continue an extension of her limits, enjoy an increase of trade and an abundance of labor for her deserving laboring classes.

"I must ask you to excuse this brief speech. I could say much more, but the night is advancing, and I forbear to detain you. My public history is before the people of this country, and whilst it does not behoove me to speak of it, I assure you of my willingness that they shall judge me by my kind regard for all the citizens of Baltimore; and that God may prosper and bless them all is the sincere prayer of an honest heart."

The Battalion and Baltimore City Guards having been added to his escort, the homeward journey was resumed on the next morning, and at York and other points on the road there were demonstrations of popular welcome. At Columbia, Pa., a town on the Susquehanna River, on the west border of Lancaster County, he was welcomed at the gates of his own county by a committee of about one hundred and fifty citizens of Lancaster, and delegates from Columbia and surrounding towns and villages, who had gathered there to receive him when his foot first fell upon the soil of the district which claimed him as peculiarly its own. As the train which carried him and his friends and the popular escort, now swelled to many hundreds, neared the city, there was firing of cannon, pealing of bells, and the formation of a procession to escort the party through the streets of the city. The cars were stopped at

the city limits, and Mr. Buchanan was conducted into an open barouche, drawn by four gray horses, and with a great civic and military display he entered the city, and passing through its principal streets, was taken to the public square. The procession halted and broke ranks, and an immense citizens' meeting was organized, in the presence of which Wm. J. Preston, Esq., on behalf of the Baltimore City Guards, addressed Mayor Sanderson, consigning the ex-President to his old friends and neighbors. After the band had played "Home Again," the Mayor, addressing Mr. Preston, returned the thanks of the citizens to his company for their courtesy to Mr. Buchanan, and then, turning to the guest of the occasion, welcomed him back to his home. Mr. Buchanan, in repending to this speech, said :

"MR. MAYOR, MY OLD NEIGHBORS, FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS :—

"I have not language to express the feelings which swell in my heart on this occasion : but I do most cordially thank you for this demonstration of your personal kindness to an old man, who comes back to you ere long to go to his final rest. And here let me say that, having visited many foreign climes, my heart has ever turned to Lancaster as the spot where I would wish to live and die. When yet a young man, in far remote Russia, my heart was still with friends and neighbors in good old Lancaster. [Applause.]

"Although I have always been true to you, I have not been so true to you as you have been to me. Your fathers took me up when a young man, fostered and cherished me through many long years. All of them have passed away, and I stand before you to-day in the midst of a new generation. [A voice in the crowd—"I saw you mount your horse when you marched to Baltimore in the war of 1812."] The friendship of the fathers for myself has descended on their children. Generations of mortal men rise, and sink, and are forgotten, but the kindness of the past generation to me, now so conspicuous in the present, can never be forgotten.

"I have come to lay my bones among you, and during the brief, intermediate period which Heaven may allot me, I shall endeavor to perform the duties of a good citizen, and a kind friend and neighbor. My advice shall be cheerfully extended to all who may seek it, and my sympathy and support shall never be withheld from the widow and the orphan. [Loud applause.] All political aspirations have departed. What I have done, during a somewhat protracted public life, has passed into history. If, at any time, I have done ought to offend a single citizen, I now sincerely ask his pardon, while from my heart I declare that I have no feeling but that of kindness to any individual in this county.

"I came to this city in 1809, more than half a century ago, and am, therefore, I may say, among your oldest citizens. When I parted from President Lincoln, on introducing him to the Executive Mansion, according to custom, I said to him : "If you are as happy, my dear sir, on entering this house as I am in leaving it and returning home, you are the happiest man in this country !" I was then thinking of the comforts and tranquility of home, as con-

trasted with the troubles, perplexities, and difficulties inseparable from the Presidential office. Since leaving Washington, I have briefly addressed my friends on two or three occasions, but have purposely avoided all allusions to party politics, and I shall do so here.

"There is one aspiration, however, which is never absent from my mind for a single moment, and which will meet with a unanimous response from every individual here present, and that is, may God preserve the Constitution and the Union, and in His good providence dispel the shadows, clouds, and darkness which have now cast a gloom over the land! Under that benign influence we have advanced more rapidly in prosperity, greatness and glory than any other nation in the tide of time. Indeed, we had become either the envy or admiration of the whole world. May all our troubles end in a peaceful solution, and may the good old times return to bless us and our posterity! [Loud and prolonged applause.]"

At the conclusion of his remarks, he seated himself in his carriage, and was escorted out through the main street leading westward to Wheatland, on the way passing under an arch spanning the street, and with other signs of popular enthusiasm attending the occasion. When the procession reached Wheatland, the city guards were drawn up in front of the house, and to the music of "Home, Sweet Home," he ascended the portico and re-entered upon the scenes of that tranquility in which it was his desire to spend the rest of his days. Briefly addressing the military company drawn up in review before him he said, that he regarded that day as one of the proudest of his life. He thanked the officers and members for their handsome escort, so freely tendered him, and held it especially significant, as he was now a private citizen only. He regretted that having just reached his home, he was not prepared to entertain them. The doors of his house had been always open, the latch-string was out. At any other time when they felt disposed to call, either as a company or individuals, they should receive a very cordial welcome. On behalf of the guards, Mr. Preston responded at length, expressing their gratification at having the privilege of attending the President, and witnessing the cordiality and universal honor with which he had been received here. Late at night Mr. Buchanan was serenaded by the musical bodies of Lancaster.

And now that he had reached his home among those who best knew and who venerated him, and had sate himself down for whatever enjoyment of private life remained to him, it would seem that at least the respect and the forbearance of all his countrymen, if not their gratitude and applause, would have followed him in his retreat. He had been "so clear in his great office;" he had so wisely and conscientiously discharged its most important trusts; he had been so free from the corruption that assails the supreme dispenser of patronage and power;



he had so well expounded the fundamental law that must govern the course of public affairs in the perilous condition that awaited them; he had done so much to secure for his successor a safe path in which to walk; he had left to that successor so little that could embarrass and so much that could guide him, that it would seem as if his errors would have been outweighed by the good that he had tried to do, as if all the virtuous and noble of the land would have interposed to shield him from censure. Nay, it would seem that he had accumulated a claim for tender consideration, large beyond the ordinary measure of such a fund. He had sacrificed on the altar of his country friendships of long years of mutual confidence and service; of that confidence and service which unite, in the strong bond of such a connection, the lofty spirits who lead together the political parties of a great and free country. In the discharge of his public duty, he had wounded and alienated hearts in which he had ever been held, and hoped always to be held, in affection and honor. To a man in the decline of life, such losses are serious things; and this man had more of them, far more, than usually falls to the lot of a statesman, even in the changing fortunes of the longest public life. His countrymen in general knew little of what his Presidency had cost him, or, if they knew anything of the rupture of such ties, they gave him no credit for the sacrifice.

Human nature, at its best, has enormous weaknesses, even if it has also great strength. Those who succeeded to the control of the Federal Government could not resist the temptation to assail their predecessors; as if the shortcomings of predecessors could excuse their own mistakes; as if crimination of those who had laid down responsibility could help those who had taken it up. But such is the natural, perhaps the inevitable course of things in free governments when a change of parties takes place, and especially in times of extreme public danger. Mr. Buchanan was pursued in his retirement with more than usual ferocity. The example that was set in high places infected those of low degree. Men said that he was a secessionist. He was a traitor. He had given away the authority of the Government. He had been weak and vacillating. He had shut his eyes when men about him, the very ministers of his cabinet, were plotting

the destruction of the Union. He was old and timid. He might have crushed an incipient rebellion, and he had encouraged it. He had been bullied at his own council board by a courageous minister who had rebuked his policy and stayed him from a pernicious step. He had carried off from the official palace of the Republic ornaments that belonged to the nation. He had foolishly endeavored to have a member of his family catalogued among the royal families of the world.

Some of these slanders were low enough in their origin, but not too low to be echoed by a careless or a shameless press. Some of them began in high quarters, and spread through all ranks of society. Some would have been of moment, if they had been true; some had only their own frivolity and falsehood to give them currency; but when do frivolity and falsehood arrest the currency of a lie?

The reader who has followed me through the foregoing pages, has been enabled to pass judgment upon some of the most serious of the reproaches with which this statesman was visited. But there are other specific charges which remain to be noticed: and if, in this final refutation, I begin with an accusation that borrowed some dignity from its source, and then have to descend to things that no origin and no authority could dignify, I must plead the simple nature of my duty as the excuse. If I seem to the reader to pile Pelion upon Ossa, he must not forget the sources from which have been derived the erroneous popular impressions which have so long prevailed concerning these affairs.

When Mr. Seward became Secretary of State under President Lincoln, he thought it proper to signalize his official correspondence with some of our representatives abroad, with many discursive views and statements about our internal affairs. However necessary it may have been to possess our ministers at the courts of Europe with the policy which the new administration intended to pursue in regard to the threatened revolution, in order that they might enlighten the statesmen of Europe on the subject, it was hardly to have been expected that an American Secretary of State would, in his official correspondence, inculcate a preceding administration of his own government, even if it had not been one of his own party. But in the letter

addressed by Mr. Seward to Mr. Adams, on the 10th of April, 1861, from which I have already had occasion to quote, speaking of what was the state of things when he came into office, he said :

The Federal marine seemed to have been scattered everywhere except where its presence was necessary, and such of the military forces as were not in the remote States and Territories were held back from activity by vague and mysterious armistices, which had been informally contracted by the late President, or under his authority, with a view to postpone conflict until impracticable concessions to disunion should be made by Congress, or at least until the waning term of his administration should reach its appointed end.\*

It is unnecessary for me to add anything to what has already been said concerning the situation of the military forces at the time when the secession movement began, or concerning the facts or reasons for the only armistice, or understanding in the nature of an armistice, "contracted by the late President," (in regard to Pensacola,) or the temporary truce of arms entered into by Major Anderson in the harbor of Charleston. There was nothing "mysterious" about either of these arrangements; nothing that could not be plainly read on the records of the War and Navy Departments. And in regard to the position of every vessel of the Navy, the records of that Department, if Mr. Seward had taken the trouble to examine them before he penned the charge that "the Federal marine seemed to have been scattered everywhere except where its presence was necessary," he would have been able to say something more than was intended to be conveyed by the word "seemed," whatever that may have been, for he would have had before him the facts. With respect, too, to "impracticable concessions," Mr. Seward might have compared his own policy, pursued for some time after he became Secretary of State, with that of the preceding administration. Mr. Toucey, Mr. Buchanan's Secretary of the Navy called on Mr. Seward at the State Department soon after the inauguration of Mr. Lincoln, and found that "the tenor of his [Mr. Seward's] language was altogether for peace and conciliation." "I was as strongly impressed with it," says Mr. Toucey,

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\* This despatch became public soon after the commencement of the session of Congress which began in December, 1861.

“as Judge Campbell appears to have been on another occasion.”\* But upon the matter of fact respecting the position of the naval forces, the following correspondence between Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Toucey exhibits in full detail the situation of the whole navy in the month of December, 1860, and the following months :

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. TOUCEY.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, July 20, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Your favor of the 5th ultimo was duly received, and should long since have been answered, but truly I had nothing to communicate except to reiterate my warm attachment and respect for yourself, and I know this was not necessary.

I perceive by the papers that Mr. Grimes, of Iowa, has had a resolution adopted by the Senate, asking the President for information of the nature of the *quasi armistice* at Fort Pickens, referred to in his message, etc.

As I was able, I have written in scraps a historical review of the last four months of my administration, not, however, intending that it should be published in my name. I consider it a complete vindication of our policy. This is placed in the hands of Judge Black and Mr. Stanton, to enable them to use the facts which it contains in case of an attack against me in Congress. They write that it is not probable any such attack will be made; but I received their letter the day before the motion of Mr. Grimes. General Dix, the Judge, and Mr. Stanton unite in the opinion that nothing in our defence should be published at present, because they do not believe the public mind is prepared to receive it, and this would have the effect of producing violent attacks against me from the Republican press, whilst we have very few, if any, journals which would be willing to answer them; ——— *sed quere de hoc*. I send you a copy of that portion of my review relating to Fort Pickens. It is not so precise as the rest, because I have not the necessary official papers in my possession. I perceive from your letter you have a distinct recollection of the whole affair. Would it not be wise and prudent for you to write to some friend in Washington on the subject—Mr. Thomson, of New Jersey, or some other person. . . .

I think you ought to pay immediate attention to this matter. It affords a fair opportunity to relieve yourself from the false and unfounded charge made against you that you had not vessels at hand to meet the emergency. The first paragraph of your letter to me presents facts which would put the charge to flight.

My health is in a great degree restored, but I recover strength slowly. My letter is so long that I shall not advert to the disastrous condition of our

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\* MS. letter from Mr. Toucey to Mr. Buchanan, June 5, 1861.

public affairs. Miss Lane writes with myself in cordial wishes for your health and prosperity, and with kindest regards to Mrs. Toucey.

Ever your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. TOUCEY TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

HARTFORD, July 31, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR :—

I have received your favor of the 20th. Senator Thomson took offence last winter because I refused to give his brother a command out of course in preference to his seniors, and although I think, from his more recent intercourse, that it has passed away, yet I am unwilling to make a request of him. The records of the Navy Department will show, that on the 24th of December, 1860, the sloop of war *St. Louis*, carrying twenty guns, was ordered from Vera Cruz to Pensacola; that on the 5th of January, 1861, the sloop of war *Macedonia*, carrying twenty-two guns, then at Portsmouth (N. H.), ready for sea, was ordered by telegraph to proceed to Pensacola; that on the 9th of January, 1861, the frigate *Sabine*, carrying fifty guns, was ordered from Vera Cruz to Pensacola; that the steam sloop of war *Brooklyn*, carrying twenty-five guns, was ordered to Pensacola with two companies of regular troops and a supply of military stores for Fort Pickens, and arrived there early in February; that the U. S. steamer *Wyandotte*, carrying five guns, was there doing effective service; that the armed storeship *Relief* was there doing good service, and was ordered to remain there; that the U. S. steamer *Crusader*, carrying eight guns, having gone from her cruising ground, on the coast of Cuba, to Pensacola for repairs, was ordered to proceed to Tortugas, and on the arrival of the troops sent there, to return immediately to Pensacola, and it being reported by the newspapers that she had arrived at New Orleans, she was, on the 10th of January, by telegraph to New Orleans, ordered to return immediately to Pensacola, where she would find her orders. The *Relief* left Pensacola with prisoners and the families of officers for New York in violation of her orders, for which her commander was tried and condemned by court-martial. The *Crusader* missed her orders. When the *Brooklyn*, the *Sabine*, the *Macedonian*, the *St. Louis*, and the *Wyandotte* were lying before Pensacola, the force being larger than was necessary, the *St. Louis*, her term of service having expired, was ordered to New York. Whether her orders had reached her before the 4th of March, I am not able to say. At this time the home squadron consisted of the *Powhatan*, *Sabine*, *Brooklyn*, *St. Louis*, *Pocahontas*, *Pawnee*, *Mohawk*, *Waterwitch*, *Wyandotte*, *Crusader*, *Cumberland*, *Macedonian* and *Relief*. The sloop of war *Plymouth*, the practice ship, was at Norfolk in good condition. The U. S. steamer *Anacosta* was in commission at Washington. The frigate *Constitution*, having been thoroughly repaired, was anchored at Annapolis, in aid of the Naval Academy. The great steamships *Colorado*, *Minnesota* and *Mississippi*, at Boston, and the *Wabash* at New

York, had been thoroughly repaired, and could put to sea in two weeks; the Merrimac, at Norfolk, in three weeks; the Roanoke, in dock at New York, in six weeks. Of the above vessels, fourteen are steamers, eight ships of the line; the Alabama, Virginia, Vermont, Ohio, North Carolina, New York, Columbus and Pennsylvania, lying at the navy yards, had been, on the 1st of December last, recommended by the Department, in pursuance of the report of a board of naval officers, to be converted into steam frigates, but Congress did not make the necessary appropriation. The frigates Brandywine, Poto-mac, St. Lawrence, Columbia and Raritan were at the navy yards, and the same board of officers had recommended that when repaired they should be razed and converted into sloops. The sloops of war Perry, Dale, Preble, Vincennes, Jamestown and Germantown had, within a few months, returned from their regular cruises on the coasts of Africa and South America and the East and West Indies, and were at the navy yards awaiting repairs. Congress had twice cut down the estimates of the Department for repairs a million dollars. Of the thirty-seven steam vessels in the navy, twenty had been added to it while I was at the head of the Department. While we had this force at home, the Mediterranean squadron consisted of but three vessels, the Susquehanna, Richmond and Iroquois; the Brazil squadron, of the Congress, Seminole and Pulaski; the East India squadron, of the Hartford, Saginaw, Dacotah and John Adams; the Pacific squadron, of the Lancaster, Cyane, St. Mary's, Wyoming and Narragansett; the African squadron, of the San Jacinto, Constellation, Portsmouth, Mohican, Saratoga, Sumter and Mystic. The Niagara was on her way to carry home the Japanese ambassadors; the Vandalia to relieve the John Adams. I make this detailed statement that you may see that there is not the slightest ground for anxiety as to the course of your administration in reference to the naval force at Fort Pickens, in the home squadron, or in the foreign squadrons. I concur with Judge Black and others, that a publication at this time is not expedient, because it would provoke attack; because it would not be heard; because the best time for it is at the moment when the tide of public sentiment begins to ebb and to set in the opposite direction, which will inevitably soon take place. The public cannot fail to see that affairs have taken a downward direction with fatal velocity since the 4th of March, and that a series of measures could not have been devised more exactly adapted to divide the country and break the Government to pieces, than that which has been pursued by your successor.

Mrs. Toucey unites with me in presenting to yourself and to Miss Lane our most respectful regards.

Ever faithfully your friend,

J. TOUCEY.

There was a peculiar, not to say a most offensive injustice, in representing Mr. Buchanan's policy as having for its object "to postpone conflict until impracticable concessions to disunion should be made by Congress, or at least until the waning term

of his administration should reach its appointed end." There was nothing impracticable in what Mr. Buchanan urged Congress to do, nor was there any "concession to disunion" in his recommendations. Moreover, he used his utmost exertions to strengthen the hands of his successor, as well as his own, so that the Executive might be able to meet any conflict that might arise. There now lie before me four printed bills, three of which show what President Buchanan endeavored to make Congress do. One of them is a bill introduced into the Senate by Mr. Bigler, on the 14th of January, 1861, "to provide for taking the sense of the people of the several States on certain proposed amendments to the Constitution of the United States."

This bill went rather beyond any "concessions" or proposed recommendations made by the President. It was read twice and ordered to be printed, but was never acted upon. The other three bills embodied measures urgently asked for by the administration, and they underwent the personal revision of the President, as appears from his MSS. notes on the copies furnished to him, which are now in my possession. The first was a bill reported on the 30th of January, 1861, from the select committee on the President's message of January 8th, and was entitled, "a bill further to provide for calling forth the militia of the United States in certain cases." It would, if enacted, have enabled the President to accept the services of volunteers to protect the forts and other public property of the United States, and to recover their possession if it had been lost. The second was a bill reported in the House by the same committee on the 30th of January, 1861, "further to provide for the collection of duties on imports." This bill was drawn with a special view to the condition of things in the port of Charleston. The third of these bills, for giving the President powers which the exigency demanded, was reported by the Committee on Military Affairs, in the House, and was, on the 20th of February, 1861, ordered to be printed, pending its second reading. It was "a bill supplementary to the several acts now in force to provide for calling forth the militia to execute the laws of the Union, suppress insurrections and repel invasions." The laws then in force provided for calling forth the militia only when the State authorities asked for protection against insurrections aimed at

the State governments, or in cases of foreign invasion. The new bill was designed to provide against insurrections aimed at the authority of the United States. Not one of these bills was ever acted upon by that Congress; so that when "the waning term" of Mr. Buchanan's administration expired, the Executive was without the appropriate means to collect the revenue outside of custom-houses, or to call out the militia to suppress insurrections against the United States, or to call for volunteers, and had but a mere handful of regular troops within reach, even to guard the city of Washington on the day of Mr. Lincoln's inauguration, or to execute any law of the United States that might meet with resistance.\*

For a long time after the month of February, 1862, there was current a story about a "cabinet scene," said to have occurred in Mr. Buchanan's cabinet in February, 1861, in which Mr. Stanton, then Attorney General, had, by a threat of resignation, backed by a similar threat by other ministers present, compelled the President to recede from something that he proposed to do. This story first became public in an English newspaper, on the 9th of February, 1862, and was immediately copied and extensively circulated in this country. The following correspondence discloses the public origin of this story, and gives it its appropriate refutation:

[THE HON. AUGUSTUS SCHELL TO THE HON. J. S. BLACK.]

NEW YORK, July 28th, 1863.

DEAR SIR:—

You will find below an extract from a letter published in the *London Observer* on the 9th of February, 1862, subscribed with initials T. W. The signature is known to be that of Mr. Thurlow Weed, of Albany, who was at the time in London.

"In February, Major Anderson, commanding Fort Moultrie, Charleston harbor, finding his position endangered, passed his garrison by a prompt and brilliant movement over to the stronger Fortress of Sumter. Whereupon Mr. Floyd, Secretary of war, much excited, called upon the President to say that Major Anderson had violated express orders and thereby seriously compromised him (Floyd), and that unless the Major was immediately remanded to Fort Moultrie, he should resign the War Office.

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\* See Senate Bill, No. 537, 36th Congress, 2d session; House Bills, Nos. 968, 969, 1003, same Congress, same session.



"The cabinet was assembled directly. Mr. Buchanan, explaining the embarrassment of the Secretary of War, remarked that the act of Major Anderson would occasion exasperation at the South; he had told Mr. Floyd that, as the Government was strong, forbearance toward erring brethren might win them back to their allegiance, and that that officer might be ordered back.

"After an ominous silence, the President inquired how the suggestion struck his cabinet.

"Mr. Stanton, just now called to the War Office [under President Lincoln], but then Attorney General, answered: 'That course, Mr. President, ought certainly to be regarded as most liberal towards "erring brethren," but while one member of your cabinet has fraudulent acceptances for millions of dollars afloat, and while the confidential clerk of another—himself in Carolina teaching rebellion—has just stolen \$900,000 from the Indian Trust Fund, the experiment of ordering Major Anderson back to Fort Moultrie would be dangerous. But if you intend to try it, before it is done I beg that you will accept my resignation.' 'And mine,' added the Secretary of State, Mr. Black. 'And mine, also,' said the Postmaster General, Mr. Holt. 'And mine, too,' followed the Secretary of the Treasury, General Dix.

"This of course opened the bleared eyes of the President, and the meeting resulted in the acceptance of Mr. Floyd's resignation."

Inasmuch as you were a member of Mr. Buchanan's cabinet, and one of the persons alluded to among the members of his cabinet who dissented from the proposition alleged to have been made by Mr. Floyd, I have thought it not improper to call upon you to state whether the subject matter of Mr. Weed's communication is or is not true.

As for myself, I do not believe it to be true, and regard it as one of the numerous slanders which have been disseminated to reflect discredit upon the late excellent President of the United States. I shall esteem it a favor if you will inform me, by letter, of the precise circumstances attending the action of Mr. Buchanan's cabinet, at the time of the transaction referred to, if any such took place, to the end that the public may be truthfully informed of the actual occurrence.

I have written this letter without the knowledge of Mr. Buchanan, solely for the purpose that the public record of Mr. Buchanan's administration may be vindicated from a charge which those who know him, as you and I do, can not but feel has originated from personal or political malice.

Yours very respectfully,

AUGUSTUS SCHELL.

[JUDGE BLACK TO MR. SCHELL.]

YORK, August 6, 1863.

"MY DEAR SIR:—

Your letter of July 28th, which I have but just now received, calls my attention to a statement published in the *London Observer*, over the signature

of T. W. I am asked if the occurrence, there said to have taken place at a cabinet council in February, 1861, is true or not, and you desire me to inform you of the precise circumstances attending the action of Mr. Buchanan's cabinet at the time of the transaction referred to.

The latter part of this request is more than I can comply with at present. All the circumstances set out with precision would, I suppose, fill a moderate sized volume; and anything short of a full account would probably do wrong to the subject. Besides, I am not convinced that the truth would be received now with public favor, or even with toleration. The time when justice shall be done draws near, but is not yet.

But the story you transcribe from the London paper is wholly fictitious. Major Anderson passed his garrison to Fort Sumter, not in February, 1861; but in December, 1860. General Dix was not then a member of the cabinet. . . . The real cause of Floyd's retirement from office had no connection with that affair.\* Mr. Stanton made no such speech as that put into his mouth by T. W., or any other speech inconsistent with the most perfect respect for all his colleagues and for the President. Neither Mr. Stanton nor Mr. Holt ever spoke to the President about resigning, upon any contingency whatever, before the incoming of the new administration.

I am, with great respect, yours,

J. S. BLACK.

For many years, the source from which Mr. Weed received any part whatever of this story, remained shrouded in mystery. Judge Black at one time had traced it to Colonel George W. McCook, of Ohio; and he received from that gentleman a qualified promise to make known, at a future period, the source from which he (Colonel McCook) derived his information. But Colonel McCook was, at the time he gave this promise, about to become a Republican candidate for the office of Governor of Ohio. He lost the election, and died soon after. It was not until I began to write the present work that I learned, from a gentleman now residing in Philadelphia, Mr. George Plumer Smith, who Mr. Weed's informant was, and how Mr. Weed became possessed of a story which he repeated in print, with some variation and a great deal of inaccuracy. Mr. Smith furnished to me in February, 1882, the following statement, and authorized me to make use of it:

#### STATEMENT.

In October, 1861, while at Willard's Hotel, in Washington, I met an old friend, Colonel George W. McCook, of Steubenville, Ohio, where I had known

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\* Ordering Anderson back to Fort Moultrie.

him as partner in law practice with Mr. Edwin M. Stanton, whom, also, I knew while in Ohio, and afterwards in Pittsburgh, where I was a merchant.

Colonel McCook and I had many conversations about the outlook then of affairs, and we agreed that history might yet with us repeat itself, and possible catastrophes make demand for a leader who, by the will of the loyal people, would be called to assume powers outside the Constitution. And we both agreed that, in such dire contingency, Mr. Stanton would be the man.

The Colonel then, with the dramatic gesture and forcible language which his surviving friends would recall, told me of the scene in the cabinet when Governor Floyd overshot himself in his demands on Mr. Buchanan, etc., and of Mr. Stanton's lead in demanding Secretary Floyd's dismissal, etc., etc., which account I readily believed authentic, and treasured it in my memory.

I was at that time detained in Washington to decide whether I would go abroad to make purchases of certain supplies for the Quartermaster's Department, and sailed a few days after the last conversation with Colonel McCook.

I made contracts in Paris, and, about the middle of November, I went down to Havre to expedite my first shipment, and there met with Mr. Thurlow Weed and his party, just arrived. I had some previous acquaintance with him, and during my stay abroad had frequent occasion to see him.

I closed up my business in Paris on the 28th January, 1862, on which day it was telegraphed from Ireland that "*Frederick P. Stanton*" was appointed to the War Department in Washington.

Going over to London the next day, I called on Mr. Weed, then there, and the mails not yet to hand. He was under the impression the new Secretary was the former Governor of Kansas. But when it was corrected I called again, and found him very desirous of information about Mr. Edwin M. Stanton's previous life and character, which I gave him, including, of course, the cabinet scene, as told me by Colonel McCook, then fresh in my recollection. But Mr. Weed did not speak of writing it out for publication, and I really regretted to find it, in his own practical adaptation for the newspaper, in the *Observer*, on the Sunday morning following. I took care to address copies to Mr. Stanton, Colonel McCook, General Meigs, and others.

Early in March following, I was in Washington, settling my accounts, and, by Mr. Stanton's invitation, called at his house. After tea, he led me into his library, when at once he asked: "Who furnished Thurlow Weed with the statements in the *Observer* which you sent me?"

I then fully detailed how it all came about, and of Colonel McCook's being in Washington when I left, and giving me the particulars of the cabinet scene, etc. Mr. Stanton reflected for some minutes, when he said: "McCook should not have talked of such matters; and, in his way, he has exaggerated what did occur; but" pausing again, he continued, "I have not time now to be watching and correcting what may be told of last winter's troubles in Mr. Buchanan's cabinet, in which I was an unwilling member; besides, many of my old Democratic friends now turn the cold shoulder to me in the changed relations which duty to my country has laid upon me."

I was, indeed, glad that the statement seemed to have attracted but little attention, and hoped it would pass out of remembrance.

But when Vice President Wilson reproduced it in the *Atlantic Monthly*, and was answered by Judge Black, I thought it my duty to write to Colonel McCook, reminding him of the occasion on which he told me of the cabinet affair, as I told its outlines to Mr. Weed, etc., and asking his (Colonel McCook's) permission to correct much which had been added to his original narrative; but I had no reply from him; and not long after he died—suddenly, poor fellow.

I had not then personal acquaintance with Judge J. S. Black, but had opportunity to explain to a friend in York what I knew of the matter, and he mentioned what I had told him to the Judge.

I met the latter at Cape May, in 1876, and had a long conversation about the reported scene, which, he said, would be fully explained in, I understood him, a publication he had in preparation.

I can only add my often and sincere regret that I should have been concerned, in any way, in doing injustice to Mr. Buchanan, in the trying scenes he had to encounter.

GEO. PLUMER SMITH.

PHILADELPHIA, February 8, 1882.

The reader should now peruse an extract from a private letter, written by Mr. Buchanan to his niece, Miss Lane, immediately after he had heard that Mr. Stanton had been appointed by President Lincoln Secretary of War. It shows, in addition to the internal evidence which the story of the "cabinet scene" carried within itself for its own refutation, that Mr. Stanton was a very unlikely person to have played the part imputed to him in that account.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MISS LANE.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, January 16, 1862.

MY DEAR HARRIET:—

Well, our friend Stanton has been appointed Secretary of War. I presume, without knowing, that this has been done by the influence of General McClellan. I have reason to believe they are very intimate. What are Mr. Stanton's qualifications for that, the greatest and most responsible office in the world, I cannot judge. I appointed him Attorney General when Judge Black was raised to the State Department, because his professional business and that of the Judge, especially in California cases, were so intimately connected that he could proceed in the Supreme Court without delay. He is a sound, clear-headed, persevering and practical lawyer, and is quite eminent, especially in patent cases. He is not well versed in public, commercial or constitutional law, because his professional duties as a country

lawyer never led him to make these his study. I believe him to be a perfectly honest man, and in that respect he differs from ———. He never took much part in cabinet councils, because his office did not require it. He was always on my side, and flattered me *ad nauseam*.\*

In the confidential letters of Mr. Buchanan, hereafter to be quoted, his feelings about this story will be fully disclosed. The story carried within itself a plain implication that he had been grossly insulted by four members of his cabinet, an insult, which if it had ever occurred, would have been instantly followed by their dismissal from office. He was not a man to brook such an indignity, nor was there a man among all those who were falsely said to have offered it, who would have dared to be guilty of it. The contradiction given to it by Judge Black, in his letter to Mr. Schell, was not immediately published.

How Mr. Stanton came to leave this falsehood without contradiction, and what he said about it after he had assumed new political relations, and after he learned the source from which Mr. Weed received it, the reader has seen from the statement of the gentleman who communicated it to Mr. Weed, and who received it from Col. McCook.

I must now descend to slanders of a nature almost too contemptible for notice, but as they gave Mr. Buchanan much annoyance, I do not think it fit to withhold all exhibition of his feelings about them. His own letters explain what they were :

[DR. BLAKE TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

WASHINGTON CITY, December 19, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

A friend has called my attention to a description of the President's levee on the first page of the New York ——— of yesterday's date, from which I make the following extract: "Next we come to the Red Room. This is properly Mrs. Lincoln's reception room. Everything in it is new except the splendid old painting of Washington. The fine pictures of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert and other members of the royal family, presented to the President of the United States for the President's mansion by the Prince of Wales, that hung upon the walls of this room, are missing. I learn that they were

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\* It will be noted from the date of this letter that it was written before the story of the "cabinet scene" became current, and therefore Mr. Buchanan could not have been led by that story to give to a member of his family this description of Mr. Stanton's demeanor towards himself. See also the letters of Mr. Stanton to Mr. Buchanan, quoted *post*.

removed to Wheatland with Mr. Buchanan. He also took away from the White House a large number of the Chinese or Japanese curiosities, intended, upon presentation, for the mansion. All these are missing." According to my recollection, the Prince of Wales presented to Miss Lane three engravings, one of his mother, another of his father, and the third of himself. They were hung in the Red Room. Whether Miss Lane took them with her to Wheatland I cannot say, but presume she did, as *they were her property*. There were no Chinese curiosities presented during your administration. The Japanese curiosities presented, I believe, through the late Commodore Perry to ex-President Pierce, remained in the house when I ceased to be Commissioner of Public Buildings. The presents made to you by the Japanese embassy were, by *your directions*, deposited by me in the Patent Office, with *the original list* of the articles. I took a receipt for them from the proper officer, which I delivered to you, and doubt not you still have it in your possession. My first impulse on reading the base insinuation of the ——'s correspondent, was to publish immediately a flat and indignant contradiction of it; but on consultation with a friend, who seemed to consider it unworthy of notice, I concluded I had better write to you and learn from you whether silent contempt, or a publication stamping it with falsehood, would be the most proper method of treating the slanderous imputation.

Very truly yours,

JNO. B. BLAKE.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO DR. BLAKE.]

WHEATLAND, December 19, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

In looking over the New York —— of yesterday, I observe that his Washington correspondent states that I took away from the White House the pictures of Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, and other members of the royal family, presented to me for the Presidential mansion by the Prince of Wales. I trust that neither the President nor Mrs. Lincoln had any connection with this statement. Likenesses of the Queen and Prince, with four of the children of the royal family, were sent to Miss Lane in loose sheets, with many kind messages, by the Prince of Wales, immediately before he left for England. I think they were borne by Lord Lyons. Miss Lane had them plainly framed at her own expense, and hung them up in the Red Room until she should return to Wheatland. I am also charged with having taken away from the White House a large number of Chinese and Japanese curiosities intended upon presentation for the mansion. You are aware that after the Japanese ambassadors left, I sent everything that had been presented by them to me to the Patent Office. There were at the time two young ladies staying at the White House, and before the ambassadors left they presented Miss Lane and each of them some trifling Japanese curiosities. What they received I do not know, but since the receipt of the —— I have inquired of Miss Hetty, and I certainly would not give twenty dollars for the whole lot. Miss Lane is absent in New York, and I cannot find her keys. . . . .

I send you the enclosed as something like what might be published. If you would call on Lord Lyons, to whom I enclose a letter, and say you called at my request, he would tell you all about the pictures of the Queen and Prince Albert, and their children. . . . .

Thank God! my health I may say is entirely restored. How glad I should be to see you! Miss Lane has been absent in New York for some time, and I do not expect her home until after New Year.

From your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[TO DR. BLAKE.]

LANCASTER, December 20, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have this moment received your favor of yesterday. I wrote to you yesterday on the subject of your letter, and suggested a mode of contradiction. I now find that you took the precaution of having a list made of the Japanese articles, and obtaining a receipt from the Patent Office. The statement may, therefore, be made still stronger.\*

The friend who advised you not to publish a contradiction committed a great mistake. The charge is mean and contemptible, as well as false, and if it were true, it would make me a mean and contemptible fellow. It is just the thing to circulate freely. I have no doubt Lord Lyons will give you a statement in writing concerning the pictures.

Wishing you many a merry Christmas, and many a happy New Year, I remain always your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

One other charge of a similar nature must now be intruded upon the notice of the reader. The following contradiction of it was drawn up by Mr. Buchanan himself for publication, but I do not know whether it was in fact published.

EX-PRESIDENT BUCHANAN.

There has recently been published in the New York *Tribune* a letter dated at Gotha on the 12th August, and purporting to have been written by Bayard Taylor, which contains the following: "In this place is published the *Almanach de Gotha*, the most aristocratic calendar in the world, containing the only reliable pedigrees and portraits of the crowned heads. Well, last summer the publisher was surprised by the reception of a portrait of Miss Harriet Lane, forwarded by her uncle, with a request that it be engraved for next year's

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\* The Patent Office receipts are now before me. The work entitled "Ladies of the White House," contains a letter from Lord Lyons about the trifling presents made by the Prince of Wales to Miss Lane.

*Almanach*, as our Republican rulers had a right to appear in the company of the reigning families."

We are authorized to say that this statement in regard to Ex-President Buchanan is without the least shadow of foundation. He never forwarded such a portrait to the publisher of the *Gotha Almanach*; never made such a request, and never had any correspondence of any kind, directly or indirectly, with that gentleman. He was, therefore, surprised when this absurd charge was a few days ago brought to his notice by a friend.

I might multiply these misrepresentations of Mr. Buchanan's acts, his sentiments and opinions, into a catalogue that would only disgust the reader. The sanctity of his domestic circle at Wheatland, after his retirement from the Presidency, and during the early stages of the civil war, was invaded by pretended accounts of his conversation, which were circulated in the issues of newspapers that were unfriendly to him, and which fed a diseased appetite for scandal that could only have existed in a state of unexampled excitement produced by the varying fortunes of the Federal arms. It was indeed a wild and phrensyed credulity that could give currency to such falsehoods as were told of him, falsehoods that had no excuse for their origin, or for the credence which they received. It was a state of things which those who are too young to remember it can scarcely conceive, and which those who lived through it must now look back upon with horror.

How he bore himself through all this flood of detraction and abuse; how he never wavered amid disaster or victory, in his firm determination to uphold with all his influence the just authority of the Federal Government; how he prayed for the restoration of the Union and the preservation of the Constitution; how he opened his purse to relieve the suffering and cheer the hearts of the brave men who were fighting the battles of their country, his private correspondence abundantly proves.

In the seven years which intervened between the end of his Presidency and his death, he had, besides the occupation of preparing the defence of his administration, and of entertaining friends, the occupation of writing letters. He was not one of those statesmen who, after a long life of great activity in the excitements of politics and the business of office, cannot be happy in retirement. He had many resources, and one of the



chief of them was his pen. Letter-writing was a sort of necessity of his mind, and it is now well that he indulged it. It is in his familiar letters during these last seven years of his life that his character comes out most vividly and attractively, and in nothing does it appear more winning, or more worthy of admiration than it does in the steadfast evenness of temper with which he bore unmerited and unprovoked calumny, and the serenity with which he looked to the future for vindication.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

1861.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH MR. STANTON, MR. HOLT, GENERAL DIX  
AND OTHERS.

AFTER his retirement to Wheatland, Mr. Buchanan received many letters from three members of his cabinet, all of whom afterwards held high office under President Lincoln,—namely, Mr. Stanton, Mr. Holt, and General Dix. His relations with Judge Black, Mr. Toucey and Mr. King continued to be very intimate, but the letters of the three other gentlemen should specially receive the attention of the reader, because their subsequent positions render them peculiarly important witnesses to the course of Mr. Buchanan's administration. The letters received or written by Mr. Buchanan during the remainder of the year 1861, are here given in their chronological order; but it should be noted that this period is divided by the bombardment of Fort Sumter, which began on the 11th of April, 1861.

[MR. STANTON TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

WASHINGTON, Sunday, March 10, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

The dangerous illness of my youngest child for the last three days must be my apology for not writing to you until to-day. I shall now endeavor to give you as full information as I possess of the state of public affairs in Washington. At the depot, on the afternoon of your departure, I parted with Mr. Holt and Mr. Toucey, and have not seen them since then. The cabinet was, as you know, nominated and confirmed that day. The next morning Mr. Seward took possession of the State Department, and Mr. Bates was shortly afterwards qualified and commissioned as Attorney General. Before this was done, Mr. Seward sent for me and requested me to draw up a nomination of Mr. Crittenden for Judge of the United States Court. I did so, and gave it to him. My understanding was that the nomination would be immediately sent in. But it has not been sent, and the general understanding is that it *will not*

be. The rumor is that the *red blacks* oppose it, and also many of the Democrats, and that Mr. Holt will be nominated. He appears now to be the chief favorite of the Republicans. At the time that Mr. Seward sent for me, he also gave me some comments of General Scott's on the report made by Mr. Holt in relation to Major Anderson and Fort Sumter. The remarkable character of these comments induced me to ask permission (which was granted) to show them to General Dix; and I designed also to procure a copy of them for you, if possible, but I have not been able to see Mr. Seward since he sent for the paper. These comments stated that they were written at night, at the General's quarters, and in the absence of his papers. This may account for what I suppose to be errors in respect to material facts. These errors relate

1st. To the sending of the *Star of the West*. This is attributed to Mr. Toucey's being unwilling to furnish the Brooklyn for that expedition. My understanding was that Mr. Toucey wanted to send the Brooklyn, and that General Scott and Mr. Holt preferred the other mode, and overruled Mr. Toucey.

2d. The second point was that on subsequent consultations General Scott urged the sending of a military and naval force to relieve Major Anderson, but that Mr. Toucey made such difficulty about furnishing the ships that it was abandoned. My understanding was that General Scott *never urged* the sending of any force to Sumter, but only to be ready to do so if necessary; and that he agreed with you in opinion that the state of political affairs in the border States, and the reports of Major Anderson, made it expedient *not* to send any force unless Sumter was attacked.

3d. A third point relates to what General Scott calls an informal truce entered into by you with certain persons from seceding States, under which the reinforcement of Sumter and Fort Pickens was suspended. My recollection in respect to that transaction is that Mr. Holt and General Scott concurred *with you* in that arrangement, which, when proposed in cabinet, was opposed by Judge Black and myself.

In his conversation with me, Mr. Seward mentioned that Mr. Lincoln and his cabinet, when this subject came up, would desire me to be present, and also Mr. Holt. I told him that if *all of the late cabinet* were requested to be present I would have no objection, but I did not think it proper *unless all* were present. He said that of course the invitation would be extended to *all*. As I never heard any thing more on the subject, I suppose that they have found it only necessary to consult Mr. Holt, who continued acting as Secretary of War. Mr. Seward has been sick for several days, but the first time that I see him my intention is to ask for a copy of General Scott's comments for you.

I am perfectly satisfied that Major Anderson *will be withdrawn*. Scott agrees with Anderson as to the force required to relieve Sumter, and evidently favors withdrawal of the troops. The same thing will no doubt be done in respect to Fort Pickens. The Montgomery commissioners have not yet applied for an audience. Various conjectures are made in respect to whether they will be received. I am also convinced by the general tone prevailing

here that there is not the least design to attempt any coercive measure. A continuation of your policy *to avoid collision* will be the course of the present administration. General Dix gave up the Treasury Department Thursday, and went home Friday morning. He on all occasions speaks of you with kindness and regard. Mr. Holt is the only one of your cabinet yet in office—the probability is that he will receive the nomination of Supreme Judge as a reward for what he terms his efforts to arrest the downward course of public affairs at the time he became Secretary of War. The resignations of General Cooper and Colonels Lay and Withers show that the feeling of secession in Virginia is growing stronger. Judge Campbell has his resignation prepared, and will send it in on the 15th of this month. This will be the most serious resignation that has yet occurred, not only on account of his high character and eminent qualities, but also because it affects a branch of the Government hitherto untouched by the contagion of secession.

Judge Black left town with his family yesterday. He is to return on Monday. The scramble for office is terrific. It is said that Lincoln takes the precaution of seeing no strangers alone. The reception on Friday is reported to have been an immense mob.

I beg you to present my compliments to Miss Lane, and shall ever remain,  
with sincere regard,

Yours truly,

EDWIN M. STANTON.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. HOLT.]

WHEATLAND, March 11, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have not heard a word from any member of my late cabinet since I left Washington, except a letter from Mr. Stanton, received yesterday. I had expected to hear often, especially from Judge Black and yourself. Meanwhile the Northern papers are teeming with what I know to be misrepresentations as to expressions used by yourself concerning my conduct. From our first acquaintance I have had the most implicit confidence in your integrity, ability and friendship, and this remains unchanged. Pray enlighten me as to what is going on in Washington.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[TO JAMES GORDON BENNETT, ESQ.]

WHEATLAND, March 11, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Will you be kind enough to direct the *Herald* to be sent to me at Lancaster? I have been quite lost without it.

I am once more settled at this, my quiet home, and one of my first impulses is to return you my cordial and grateful thanks for the able and powerful support which you have given me almost universally throughout my stormy and turbulent administration. Under Heaven's blessing the administration has

been successful in its foreign and domestic policy, unless we may except the sad events which have recently occurred. These no human wisdom could have prevented. Whether I have done all I could, consistently with my duty, to give them a wise and peaceful direction towards the preservation or reconstruction of the Union, will be for the public and posterity to judge. I feel conscious that I have done my duty in this respect, and that I shall, at last, receive justice. With my very kindest regards to Mrs. Bennett, I remain,

Sincerely and respectfully your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. STANTON TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

WASHINGTON, March 12, 1861.

DEAR SIR:—

It is now the universal impression in this city, that Sumter and Pickens will both be surrendered. The *National Republican* (Lincoln organ) says that it was determined on at the cabinet meeting Saturday. Enclosed I send you a slip from the New York *Tribune* of Monday, 11th. Harvey, the telegraphic correspondent, is intimate and in daily association with Mr. Holt, but he surely can have no warrant for the assertion in the article referred to. Cameron was sworn into office yesterday.\* The administration is now completely organized, but demands for office necessarily must occupy their chief attention. I have not seen any of the cabinet, or any leading Senator of that party, since the date of my last letter.

Floyd is here. Russell has been discharged from the indictment against him. All accounts here represent the secession feeling in Virginia to be rapidly strengthening and extending. It would not surprise me to see Virginia out in less than ninety days, and Maryland will be close at her heels. Lincoln and the family at the White House are represented to be greatly elated at Douglas joining in defence of the new administration. It is said to be the chief topic of conversation with visitors at the Executive mansion.

You will notice in the *Tribune* an article signed "One who sees the facts," which is quite sharp on Major Anderson, and the writer evidently agrees with you in respect to the Major's course. Glossbrenner started home this morning.

With great respect, I remain, yours truly,

EDWIN M. STANTON.

[MR. HOLT TO MR. BUCHANAN]

WASHINGTON, March 14, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have read, with amazement and much sorrow, the statement contained in your kind letter of the 11th inst., just received, that the Northern papers are teeming with misrepresentations of expressions, said to have been used by myself, concerning your conduct. As I read but few of these papers, it is not surprising that such calumnies should have escaped my notice; but I am

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\* As Secretary of War.

astonished that they should not have been mentioned to me by some of our common friends. Having no knowledge whatever of the nature or details of these misrepresentations, of course I can offer you no explanation or refutation of them. This much, however, may be safely affirmed, that if they impute to me expressions in any degree disparaging to yourself personally or officially, they are utterly false. I gave to your administration an earnest and sincere support, first from a high sense of duty to my country, and next out of regard for yourself personally. What I thus supported, I will never cease to defend.

I feel a gratitude that words cannot convey, for the declaration that, in despite of all these fabrications and perversions of a profligate press, your confidence remains unshaken. Be assured that I have not, and never will, do aught unworthy of the trust that you so generously repose. I have labored to deserve your friendship, which has lavished upon me honors and distinctions for which I am, and shall continue to be, grateful with every throb of my life. No greater mortification could befall me than to fear even that you regarded me insensible to these kindnesses, or capable of being less than your devoted friend, now and hereafter, here and everywhere.

I think you have little reason to disquiet yourself about the calumnies of the press. The enthusiasm which greeted you in your progress homeward shows how these things have impressed the popular heart. You will not have to live long to witness the entombment of the last of the falsehoods by which your patriotic career has been assailed. If you are not spared until then, you need have no fear but that history will do you justice.

I have not met with any member of your cabinet, except Governor Toucey, since we separated on Monday night. I remained in the War Department until the Monday following, when General Cameron was qualified. I have seen the President but once since, and then on a matter of business about which he wished the information which he supposed my connection with the War Department would supply. Having no means of knowing the plans and purposes of the administration, I can only say I am well satisfied its policy will be decidedly pacific and conciliatory. I should not be surprised to learn, any morning, that Fort Sumter had been evacuated. As Fort Pickens can be retained without a collision, it may be differently treated. All is tranquil here, and the tone of feeling prevailing is constantly increasing in hopefulness and confidence. The indications from the border States are very encouraging. The popular mind is rapidly becoming tranquilized. This accomplished, and the revolution will die out. Excitement is the aliment on which it feeds, and without this it could scarcely subsist for sixty days. The work of transferring the offices is going on, but not rapidly or remorselessly. The temper of the Republicans seems greatly changed from what it was during their conflict for power. I believe every effort will be made to preserve the Government, and I have more hope of the result now than I have had for the last three months.

With kind regards to Miss Lane, I am, very respectfully,

Your sincere friend,

J. HOLT.

[GENERAL DIX TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

NEW YORK, March 14, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I left Washington on Friday (Mr. Chase having relieved me on the preceding day\*), went to Boston on Saturday, passed Sunday with my wife and daughter, and returned to this city on Monday. I am at this moment annoyed with the apprehension that I may be obliged to go to Washington to-morrow. If so, I will advise you of the cause.

When we parted, there was a feeling of doubt as to my friend Major Anderson. I wrote him a letter the day his despatches were received—in fact, the night after our meeting at Mr. Ould's house, in which I alluded in the strongest terms of reprobation to the treachery of some of the officers of the Government in the South, contrasting it with his own courage and constancy. I made no allusion to his despatches. I have received a letter from him which is perfectly satisfactory. I will in a few days send you copies of mine to him and his answer.

I envy you the quietude of Wheatland. There is none here. The excitements are wearisome in the extreme. The people are now agitated by the intelligence that Fort Sumter is to be abandoned. Here, I think, there will be no decided demonstration of disapproval. But in the country it will be different. The disappointment will be very great, and it will go far to turn the current against the new administration. Your record will brighten in proportion. Of course, an attempt will be made to cast the responsibility on you. But there is a complete defence, as we know.

I shall never forget the six happy weeks I passed with you. The remembrance of your kindness, and that of Miss Lane, will always be among my brightest retrospections. Nothing would afford me so much gratification as to be able to do something in return for your contributions to my happiness and comfort. With my kind regards to her, I am, dear sir,

Sincerely and faithfully yours,

JOHN A. DIX.

[MR. STANTON TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

WASHINGTON, March 14, 1861.

DEAR SIR:—

Your favor was received last evening. I shall take care of it so that when required it may be returned.

There is no doubt of Sumter being evacuated; report says the order has gone, but that, I think, is doubtful. You will have noticed the resolution introduced yesterday by Mr. Douglas in the Senate. That looks like a comprehensive platform for relinquishing everything in the seceded States, and

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\* As Secretary of the Treasury.

even those that sympathize with them. To me it seems like the first step towards a strictly Northern non-slaveholding confederacy.

In the last two days nothing has occurred here to my knowledge but what you will see in the newspapers. There has been no further action in respect to the Supreme Judgeship. It is generally understood that Crittenden will not be nominated. Judge Campbell has reconsidered his resignation, and will not resign immediately. The Court adjourns to-day. I am now writing in the Supreme Court room. If the Court ever reassembles, there will be considerable change in its organization. Judge Grier went home sick two days ago. Judge McLean is reported to be quite ill. Lincoln will probably (if his administration continues four years) make a change that will affect the constitutional doctrines of the Court.

The pressure for office continues unabated. Every department is overrun, and by the time that all the patronage is distributed the Republican party will be dissolved. I hope that peace and tranquility, with cessation from your intense labors, will long preserve you in health and happiness.

Yours truly,

EDWIN M. STANTON.

P. S.—The Supreme Court have just decided Mrs. Gaines's case in her favor—four judges to three—the Chief Justice, Grier, and Catron *dissenting*. They have also decided that the Federal Government *has no power* to coerce the Governor of a State to return a fugitive from justice, although it is his duty to comply with the demand.

Yours, etc.,

E. M. S.

[MR. STANTON TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

WASHINGTON, March 16, 1861.

DEAR SIR:—

Notwithstanding what has been said in the papers and the universal reports here during the last week, the order for the removal of the troops from Sumter has not, as I am assured, yet been given. Yesterday it was still under debate. Every day affords proof of the absence of any settled policy or harmonious concert of action in the administration. Seward, Bates and Cameron form one wing; Chase, Miller, Blair, the opposite wing; Smith is on both sides, and Lincoln sometimes on one, sometimes on the other. There has been agreement in nothing. Lincoln, it is complained in the streets, has undertaken to distribute the whole patronage, small and great, leaving nothing to the chiefs of departments. Growls about Scott's "imbecility" are growing frequent. The Republicans are beginning to think that a monstrous blunder was made in the tariff bill, and that it will cut off the trade of New York, build up New Orleans and the Southern ports, and leave the Government no revenue—they see before them the prospect of soon being without money and without credit. But with all this, it is certain that *Anderson will be withdrawn*.



I do not believe there will be much further effort to assail you. Mr. Sumner told me yesterday that Scott's *proposed order* was based upon purely military reasons and the limited military resources of the Government. The embarrassments that surrounded you they now feel; and whatever may be said against you must recoil as an argument against them. And in giving reasons for their action, they must exhibit the facts that controlled you in respect to Sumter.

Mr. Holt has gone to New York. I have not seen him. When he called on me I happened to be from home, and when I called he was absent. Judge Black is here, and I suppose intends to remain for some time. He is staying at Harrison's. I hope to be able to procure a copy of Mr. Holt's letter and General Scott's comments next week, and I intend to call and see the General and have a talk with him. With sincere regard, I remain,

Yours truly,

EDWIN M. STANTON.

[MR. STANTON TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

WASHINGTON, March 16, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR :—

Yours of yesterday was received this morning, and its arrival telegraphed. I do not think there will be any serious effort to assail your administration in respect to Fort Sumter. That would imply a coercive policy on their part, and hostility to your pacific measures. The tendency of General Scott's remarks was rather to impute blame to Mr. Toucey than to any one else. And as Mr. Holt and the General concurred in everything done or written, their concurrence will defend you.

I will procure the papers you desire, and forward them, and will make you a visit as soon as the illness of my child will suffer me to leave home. In the meantime, I shall write to you often, and apprise you of what is going on.

Yours truly,

EDWIN M. STANTON.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO GENERAL DIX.]

WASHINGTON, March 18, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR :—

Many thanks for your kind letter of the 14th instant. I shall ever recollect with pleasure and satisfaction your brief sojourn with us at the White House, and with gratitude the able and successful manner in which you performed the duties of your arduous and responsible office.

You might envy me the quiet of Wheatland were my thoughts not constantly disturbed by the unfortunate condition of our country. The question of the withdrawal of the troops from Fort Sumter at first agitated the public mind in this vicinity; but my impression is that the people are now becoming gradually reconciled to it. There is a general desire for peace. As a military

movement, General Scott's name will go far to sustain Mr. Lincoln. After Major's Anderson's letter, received on the 4th March, it was very doubtful whether he could be reinforced by the means within the power of the Government. The only alternative would have been, to let the Confederate States commence the war on him, and if the force had been so superior as to render successful resistance impossible, after the honor of the flag had been maintained, then to authorize him to capitulate. Indeed, I presume such, or nearly such, was the purport of the instructions.

It is probable an attempt will be made, as you suggest, to cast the responsibility on me. But I always refused to surrender the fort and was ever ready to send reinforcements on the request of Major Anderson.

I thank God that the revolution has as yet been bloodless, notwithstanding my duty, as prescribed in my annual message, has been performed as far as this was practicable.

With my kindest regards to Mrs. Dix, I remain always, sincerely and respectfully,

Your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. HOLT TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

WASHINGTON, March 20, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

On reaching home last evening, I had the pleasure of receiving yours of the 16th inst., and now hasten to inclose the copy of my letter to the President, as requested. I think you need have no apprehension that either yourself or friends will be called upon for any elaborate vindication of your policy in reference to Fort Sumter; events are hurrying on too rapidly for that. You will ere this have seen Breckinridge's speech in the Senate, connected with the movement now making by his friends in Kentucky, through an irregular popular convention gathered from the highways and hedges, to force the legislature to the adoption of a revolutionary policy. This demonstration on his part is regarded as very significant. Kentucky voted against him, on the *suspicion* merely that he was a disunionist; after this avowal, I doubt not, her condemnation of him will be far more decided.

I very much fear an early recognition on the part of France of the new Confederacy, which, followed as it would speedily be by others, would go far to consolidate the Southern republic. The bait for the material interests of Europe has been adroitly prepared, and cannot be long resisted. But I think such a step by a friendly government taken within ninety days after the revolt of the States ought to be treated almost as *casus belli*. Fort Sumter, I presume, is about to be evacuated, which will do much to allay popular excitement in South Carolina, and thus take away the aliment on which the revolution is feeding. Still there will remain military complications in the South, for the peaceable adjustment of which fears may well be entertained.

You have my sincere thanks for your kind invitation to visit Wheatland.

It would afford me the greatest pleasure to do so, and I trust that events may yet place this gratification within my reach.

Very respectfully and truly your friend,

J. HOLT.

[GENERAL DIX TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

NEW YORK, March 28th, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR :—

I intended to have sent you long ere this a copy of my letter to Major Anderson, and his reply. Mine was written on the evening of the inauguration, after the consultation at Mr. Ould's; and it was intended to encourage him if he was true, or to cut him to the heart if he was false. You know, however, that I would not doubt his honor and good faith. I should have sent the correspondence last week, but I was urged to go to Washington to see Mr. Chase in regard to the new loan. The request came from the Government, and I could not decline it. I found the Secretary well informed in regard to the condition of the finances, and think he will acquit himself with credit.

When I left (on Saturday last), I do not think the administration had any settled policy. It was merely drifting with the current, at a loss to know whether it were better to come to an anchor, or set sail. There had not been at that time a full cabinet meeting; and I know that the foreign appointments had been made without consulting the Secretary of the Treasury. I believe Mr. Lincoln is acting on the theory of advising, in regard to appointments, with the head of the Department under which they properly fall, and with none of the others.

Will you please to say to Miss ——— that I have the assurance she desired in regard to her nephew.

My wife and daughters are in Boston, and I am very desolate.

I think it is decided to withdraw Major Anderson, without holding your administration to any responsibility for it. The attempt, as must be seen, would not only be fruitless, but absurd.

The loan of eight millions will be taken next week on favorable terms. If the bids for the stock are not satisfactory, Mr. Chase has the alternative of issuing Treasury notes, payable in two years, and convertible into stock. This privilege of convertibility will enable him to place them at par. But it would be better, if he can get a fair price for the stock, to take it, and get the eight millions out of the way for twenty years.

I beg to be kindly remembered to Miss Lane, and am, my dear sir, with sincere regard,

Faithfully yours,

JOHN A. DIX.

[MR. STANTON TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

WASHINGTON, April 3d, 1861.

DEAR SIR:—

Although a considerable period has elapsed since the date of my last letter to you, nothing has transpired here of interest but what is fully detailed in the newspapers. Mr. Toucey left here last week. Judge Black is still in the city. General Dix made a short visit at the request of the Secretary of the Treasury. Mr. Holt, I think, is still here, but I have not seen him for several days. You of course saw Thompson's answer and Mr. Holt's reply. I have not had any intercourse with any of the present cabinet, except a few brief interviews with Mr. Bates, the Attorney General, on business connected with his Department. Mr. Lincoln I have not seen. He is said to be very much broken down with the pressure that is upon him in respect to appointments. The policy of the administration in respect to the seceding States remains in obscurity. There has been a rumor, for the last two or three days, that, notwithstanding all that has been said, there will be an effort to reinforce Fort Sumter; but I do not believe a word of it. The special messenger, Colonel Lamon, told me that he was satisfied it could not be done. The new loan has been bid for, at better rates than I anticipated; and I perceive General Dix was one of the largest bidders at the highest rates. The new Tariff Bill seems to give the administration great trouble; and luckily it is a measure of their own. The first month of the administration seems to have furnished an ample vindication of your policy, and to have rendered all occasion of other defence needless. The rumors from Richmond are very threatening; secession is rapidly gaining strength there.

Hoping that you are in the enjoyment of good health and happiness, I remain, as ever,

Yours,

EDWIN M. STANTON.

P. S.—12 o'clock. The Secretary of the Treasury has determined to reject all the bids for the new loan under 94. This gives him \$3,099,000 only of eight millions called for. He could have obtained the whole amount at 93½. Riggs thinks the Secretary has made a great mistake in not taking the whole sum, and that he will not get as good terms as 93½ in future. There are no bids here taken.

E. M. S.

[MR. STANTON TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

WASHINGTON, April 10th, 1861.

DEAR SIR:—

I am rejoiced to learn by yours of the 8th instant, received this morning, that your good health continues. Mrs. Stanton desires to return her thanks for your kind invitation. It would give her great pleasure to make you a

visit, if the care of young children permitted her to leave home. Before long I hope to have the pleasure of paying my respects to you at Wheatland.

Enclosed I send you a copy of General Scott's "views," as published in the *Intelligencer*. The first I ever heard of them was when they were read in cabinet by Floyd on the 27th of December. I have been hoping to procure for you a copy of General Scott's "observations" upon Mr. Holt's last letter respecting Sumter, but as yet have not succeeded. I saw Mr. Holt on Sunday. I had supposed he might have some knowledge of the designs of the administration and the purpose of the recent military and naval movements; but he said he had none. He has received a curious letter from General Twiggs, the substance of which is "that the power to dismiss an officer of the army without trial has been exercised, and he does not dispute it; but Mr. Holt has *assumed the right* to apply epithets the propriety of which he will discuss with General Holt, whenever he has the honor of meeting him personally." What would he have thought of the epithet "cowardice" which you struck out of Mr. Holt's order? Mr. Seaton, when I called on him this morning, expressed his gratification to hear of your good health, and spoke of you with much kindness. He says he has no knowledge of the movements or policy of the administration but what he finds in the New York papers, has not seen Lincoln since the inauguration, and has no intercourse with the cabinet. Doctor Gwin has just returned from Mississippi. He speaks with great confidence of the stability and power of the Confederacy, and evidently sympathizes strongly with them. Every day impresses stronger conviction upon the public mind here that armed collision will soon take place. Lincoln has appointed his partner, Colonel Lamon, marshal. He is to enter upon the office Friday; and Selden says he gives as a reason for doing so immediately that apprehensions are entertained of a hostile attack upon Washington. But I think that apprehension is as groundless as the rumor that hurried Lincoln from Harrisburg to Washington.

I beg you to present my kindest regards to Miss Lane. The rumor continues rife that she is soon to return to this city. Mrs. Stanton and myself will be happy to welcome her. I shall continue to keep you advised of any thing of interest that may transpire here, and hope that your life may long be spared in health and happiness.

Yours truly,

EDWIN M. STANTON.

P. S.—12 o'clock. It is certain that the administration is panic-stricken for some cause. They commenced this morning an active enrolment of the militia of the District. Chew, of the State Department, was sent last week to Charleston. I have just been told that he went with a formal note to Governor Pickens—that the administration designed to succor Major Anderson—that fourteen ships would be sent—that they meant only to supply provisions, but if there was any resistance forces would also be sent in. It is now reported as coming from one of the commissioners that the *batteries have*

*opened on Sumter.* Soldiers are also being placed in the Departments. This is the last rumor on the Avenue.

[MR. STANTON TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

WASHINGTON, April 11, 1861.

DEAR SIR:—

The letter of Twiggs is in accordance with his character, and shows how richly he deserved the epithet with which he would have been branded on the records of the country and before the world but for your forbearance. The cowardly effort to insult and wound you is worthy of one who betrayed his trust and traitorously surrendered the arms and colors of his Government. The idle threat to visit Lancaster shows that "braggart" is to be added to traitor and coward, in order to designate his full measure of infamy.

I showed your letter and the copy of Twiggs' letter to Mr. Holt. He thought it ought to be published by you, but I do not. It would be dignifying the creature too much. I enclose a copy of his letter to Mr. Holt. You will observe that the same contemptible threat of personal vengeance is made in it. But it is gratifying to know that Twiggs feels so acutely the sting of his dismissal, and that all the whitewashing of the Confederate States affords him no relief. I have applied to the War Office for copies of the several orders relating to Twiggs, and shall probably have them to-morrow, and will forward them to you.

There is great "soldiering" in town the last two days. The yard in front of the War Office is crowded with the District Militia, who are being mustered into service. The feeling of loyalty to the Government has greatly diminished in this city. Many persons who would have supported the Government under your administration refuse to be enrolled. Many who were enrolled have withdrawn, and refuse to take the oath. The administration has not acquired the confidence and respect of the people here. Not one of the cabinet or principal officers has taken a house or brought his family here. Seward rented a house "while he should continue in the cabinet," but has not opened it, nor has his family come. They all act as though they meant to be ready "to cut and run" at a minute's notice—their tenure is like that of a Bedouin on the sands of the desert. This is sensibly felt and talked about by the people of the city, and they feel no confidence in an administration that betrays so much insecurity. And besides, a strong feeling of distrust in the candor and sincerity of Lincoln personally and of his cabinet has sprung up. If they had been merely silent and secret, there might have been no ground of complaint. But assurances are said to have been given and declarations made in conflict with the facts now transpiring in respect to the South, so that no one speaks of Lincoln or any member of his cabinet with respect or regard.

The facts about Sumter it is impossible to ascertain, for the reasons that have been mentioned, for no one knows *what to believe*. The nearest conjecture I can form is this:—

1st. That the Baltic has been sent with provisions for Sumter.

2d. That the Powhatan has been sent with forces to land and attack the batteries.

3d. That a *secret* expedition, independent of General Scott, has been sent, under charge of Fox, to make an effort to land in the night at Sumter.

The refusal to admit Captain Talbot to Sumter may prevent concert of action with Major Anderson, and I think the whole thing will prove a failure. There is no excitement here. People are anxious, but the sensation telegrams sent from here are without any foundation. It is true, however, that Ben McCullough has been here on a scouting expedition, and he carefully examined all the barracks and military posts in the city, and said that he expected to be in possession of the city before long. He stayed all night at Doctor Gwin's. This has a business aspect. It is believed that a secession ordinance will be passed by the Virginia convention to-day.

Yours truly,

EDWIN M. STANTON.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO J. BUCHANAN HENRY.]

(Without date.)

The Confederate States have deliberately commenced the civil war, and God knows where it may end. They were repeatedly warned by my administration that an assault on Fort Sumter would be civil war, and they would be responsible for the consequences. The last of these warnings happens to be before me, and is contained in the last sentence of Mr. Holt's letter to Mr. Hayne, of February 6th, 1861. It is as follows: "If, with all the multiplied proofs which exist of the President's anxiety for peace, and of the earnestness with which he has pursued it, the authorities of that State shall assault Fort Sumter and peril the lives of the handful of brave and loyal men shut up within its walls, and thus plunge our common country into the horrors of civil war, then upon them, and those they represent, must rest the responsibility."

I have been entirely well since my return home, until within the last few days, when I have suffered from sharp twinges of rheumatism in my legs.

With my kindest regards to your wife, I remain, very affectionately,

Your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. STANTON TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

WASHINGTON, April 12, 1861.

DEAR SIR:—

We have the war upon us. The telegraphic news of this morning you will have seen before this reaches you. The impression here is held by many: 1st, that the effort to reinforce will be a failure; 2d, that in less than twenty-

four hours from this time Anderson will have surrendered; 3d, that in less than thirty days Davis will be in possession of Washington.

Yours truly,

EDWIN M. STANTON.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO GENERAL DIX.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, April 19, 1861.

MY DEAR GENERAL:

I need scarcely say I was much gratified with your letter to Major Anderson, as well as with his answer. You placed, in an eloquent and striking light, before him the infamous conduct of General Twiggs and others, and his response was manly and loyal. By the bye, I some time since received an insulting letter from General Twiggs, dated in Mississippi on the 30th ultimo. Its conclusion is as follows: "Your usurped right to dismiss me from the army might be acquiesced in, but you had no right to brand me as a traitor; this was personal, *and I shall treat it as such*, not through the papers, but *in person*. I shall, most assuredly, pay a visit to Lancaster, for the sole purpose of a *personal interview* with you. So, sir, prepare yourself. I am well assured that public opinion will sanction *any course* I may take with you."

I have paid no attention to this note, and entertain but little apprehension from the threats of this hoary-headed rebel. My fate, however, is, in some respects, hard. After my annual message of the 3d December, in which I made as able an argument as I could against secession, and indicated my purpose to collect the revenue and defend the Federal forts in South Carolina, etc., the Southern friends of the administration fell away from it. From the line prescribed in this message, I am not conscious that I have departed a hair's breadth, so far as it was practicable to pursue it. I was ready and willing at all times to attempt to collect the revenue, and, as a necessary preliminary, I nominated a collector to the Senate. You know the result.

After my explosion with the commissioners of South Carolina at the end of December, the Southern Senators denounced me on the floor of the Senate; but after my message to Congress of the 8th January, one of them at least abused me in terms which I would not repeat. In that message I declared that "the right and the duty to use military force defensively against those who resist the Federal officers, in the execution of their legal functions, and against those who assail the property of the Federal Government, is clear and undeniable;" and more to the same purpose.

Warning was repeatedly given that if the authorities of South Carolina should assail Fort Sumter, this would be the commencement of a civil war, and they would be responsible for the consequences. The last and most emphatic warning of this character, is contained in the concluding sentence of Mr. Holt's final and admirable answer to Mr. Hayne of the 6th of February. It is as follows: "If with all the multiplied proofs which exist of the President's anxiety for peace, and of the earnestness with which he has pursued



it, the authorities of that State shall assail Fort Sumter, and peril the lives of the handful of brave and loyal men shut up within its walls, and thus plunge our common country into the horrors of civil war, then upon them and those they represent must rest the responsibility." This letter has been published, but seems to have been forgotten. I perceive that you are to be President of the great Union meeting. Would it not be well, in portraying the conduct of South Carolina in assailing Fort Sumter, to state that this had been done under the most solemn warnings of the consequences, and refer to this letter of Mr. Holt? Nobody seems to understand the course pursued by the late administration. A quotation from Holt's letter would strengthen the hands of the present administration. You were a member of the cabinet at its date, and I believe it received your warm approbation. Hence it would come from you with peculiar propriety.

Had I known you were about to visit Washington on the business of the Treasury, I should have urged you to call at Wheatland on your return. You would then, as you will at all times, be a most welcome visitor.

They talk about keeping secrets. Nobody seems to have suspected the existence of an expedition to reinforce or supply Fort Sumter at the close of our administration.

The present administration had no alternative but to accept the war initiated by South Carolina or the Southern Confederacy. The North will sustain the administration almost to a man; and it ought to be sustained at all hazards.

Miss Hetty feels very much indebted to you, and you are frequently the subject of kind remembrances in our small family circle. Please to present my kind regards to Mrs. Dix.

From your friend always,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[GENERAL DIX TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

NEW YORK, April 24, 1861.

DEAR SIR:—

As chairman of a committee of citizens having the war in charge, every moment of my time is engrossed, and I have only time to thank you for your kind and important letter. It reached me just as I was going to the great meeting on Saturday. I enclose a paper giving my remarks. You will see the use I have made of your letter. I had no time to correct, add or abridge, as my remarks were in type before I left the stand, and, indeed, were in circulation in the streets.

There was one passage in your letter I was very anxious to read to the meeting. I have never taken a liberty with a private letter, though I was never so strongly tempted. The sentence I allude to is this: "The present administration had no alternative but to accept the war initiated by South Carolina or the Southern Confederacy. The North will sustain the adminis-

tration almost to a man; and it ought to be sustained at all hazards." May I use the foregoing, if I think it proper and a fit occasion presents itself? Many of our political friends express great gratification at the statement your letter enabled me to make.

I will write more fully in a few days, and am, with sincere respect and regard,

Your friend,

JOHN A. DIX.

P. S.—The Republicans here have behaved very well. They placed me at the head of the Committee on Resolutions, and gave a majority of the Committee to us. The resolutions, with one exception, were drawn by me.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO GENERAL DIX.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, April 25, 1861.

MY DEAR GENERAL:—

I have just received your favor of yesterday, with the *New York Times* containing your remarks as president of the great Union meeting. They were excellent and appropriate, and I am much indebted to you for them. I had read them before in the *Sunday Herald*.

Since the day and hour that I delivered my message, on the 3d December last, I have never departed from it for a single moment. The argument which it contained against secession, and the determination it expressed to collect the revenue and protect the property of the United States, produced an instantaneous alienation of the Southern Senators. After my difficulties with the South Carolina commissioners, this became a violent and settled hostility, and I was openly denounced by them on the floor of the Senate.

Supposing that Fort Sumter would then be attacked, the expedition of the *Star of the West* was organized and prepared by General Scott. Before it sailed, however, information was received from Major Anderson and some other sources, I do not recollect what, which, in the opinion of the Secretaries of War and of the Navy and General Scott, rendered it unnecessary. It was then countermanded by General Scott; but the countermand did not reach New York until after it had sailed. But you know all this.

I have no doubt of the loyalty and good faith of Major Anderson. His forbearance must be attributed to his desire of preserving peace and avoiding a hostile collision. When the Major, in a firm and patriotic manner, refused to surrender the fort to Beauregard, it seems he informed him that his provisions would last but a few days. What an outrage it was, after this information, to fire on the fort.

I remain, most truly,

Your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

P.S.—In regard to the sentences in my letter, it might have been well, and I think it would have been, to read them. It is now probably too late, unless another good opportunity would seem to justify.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. BAKER.]

WHEATLAND, April 26, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

What on earth has become of my friends in Philadelphia? It is some time since I have heard from any of them. But almost every day I receive violent, insulting and threatening anonymous letters from that city. Now, I am not easily moved, but I should like to know whether I am in danger of a personal attack from there, so that I may be prepared to meet it. They know not what they would do; because, when my record is presented to the world, all will be clear as light.

In Lancaster there was at first considerable feeling against me, but that has subsided very fast. My old friends seem to be faithful and true. The speech of General Dix at New York threw some light upon the subject, and had a happy effect here. This, united with General Twiggs' threatening letter, at once arrested the tide. Has the speech of General Dix been published in any of the Philadelphia papers?

My old friend —— has not been near me since my return, and I am told he is very bitter.

The officers, and I may add, the men of the two Ohio regiments here have the most friendly dispositions. Great numbers of them have visited me.

I receive the kindest letters from New York. Is there any danger of disturbance to the public peace in Philadelphia?

What has become of Judge Black? I know not where he is. He may be still in Somerset. I wrote to him there at his own request some time ago, but have received no answer. The attack on Fort Sumter was an outrageous act. The authorities at Charleston were several times warned by my administration that such an attack would be civil war, and would be treated as such. If it had been made in my time it should have been treated as such.

From your friend, as ever,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. STANTON.]

WHEATLAND, May 6, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

The last two letters which I received from you are both dated on the 12th April, and were acknowledged by me on the 17th. I have heard nothing either from yourself or Mr. Holt since the assault upon Fort Sumter. That you have written I entertain not a doubt, because you were to keep me advised of anything of interest which might transpire at Washington. The mails have been very irregular. Whether our friend Holt is in Washington or in Kentucky or whereabouts is unknown to this deponent. Black is somewhere, as quiet as a mouse.

The first gun fired by Beauregard aroused the indignant spirit of the North

as nothing else could have done, and made us a unanimous people. I had repeatedly warned them that this would be the result. I had supposed, and believed, that it would be the policy of Mr. Lincoln's administration to yield to the popular impulse, and banish, at least for the present, all party distinctions. In this I have been, most probably, mistaken. I judge from the answer of Mr. Seward, Jr., to an inquiry propounded to him about some arrangement with the enemy, in which he goes out of his way to say, that the days for such things had passed away since the 4th of March. I suppose he alluded to the arrangement made not to land the forces, but merely the supplies, at Fort Pickens whilst the Peace Convention were in session, unless the revolutionists should manifest a disposition to assail it. I have not got in my possession copies of the orders issued by Messrs. Holt and Toucey on that occasion, with the full approbation of General Scott. If Mr. Holt be in Washington, I would thank you to obtain from him a copy of this military order. I shall write to Mr. Toucey to-day for a copy of the naval order.

Upon reëxamination of the whole course of my administration, from the 6th November, 1860, I can find nothing to regret. I shall at all times be prepared to defend it. The Southern Senators became cold after my message of the 3d December, and bitterly hostile after my explosion with the first South Carolina commissioners. After this our social relations ceased; and all because I would not consent to withdraw the troops from Fort Sumter, nor would I agree not to reinforce them; but, under all circumstances, uniformly declared that I would send reinforcements whenever requested by Major Anderson, or the safety of the fort required them. I am sorry you have not been able to procure for me General Scott's *critique* on Mr. Holt's letter to President Lincoln. I hope Mr. Holt himself has a copy of it.

We live here in content and quiet, and see our friends in a social way. The officers of the Ohio regiments visit us occasionally, and are quite agreeable men, and most of them are Democrats. We had a visit from Mr. Sherman yesterday.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. J. C. G. KENNEDY.]

WHEATLAND, LANCASTER, May 13, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Many thanks for your kind letter of May 11th received this day. My letter to Mr. Seaton had no other object in view than to suggest hints to be used by him if he thought proper. I have kept no copy of it, though I have a general recollection of what it contains. If there is nothing personally harsh or offensive in it towards those officers who have abandoned their flag notwithstanding their oaths, I can perceive no objection to its publication with the explanation you propose to be given. I do not think there is anything harsh or offensive in it. I have been quite unwell for a week or ten days; the last

few days I have been confined to my bed. I believe, with the blessing of God, I may weather this storm, though it has been severe. It is very inconvenient for me at the present moment, when all the world is alive, to be sick in bed. Please to present me in the kindest terms to Mr. Seaton, and believe me always to be sincerely and respectfully your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. STANTON TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

WASHINGTON, May 16, 1861.

DEAR SIR:—

Your letter by Mr. Magraw was received; and I designed to send an answer by him, but he left here without my knowledge. On the 20th of April, the day after the Baltimore riot, and again on Blue Tuesday, the day before the arrival of the New York regiments, I wrote to you. These letters will probably reach you some time, if they have not already arrived; but I regret their miscarriage, as they kept up a regular chain of Washington events from the date of Lincoln's first proclamation after the capture of Sumter, and since that time incidents have passed so rapidly that I cannot recall them in their order.

The fling of Mr. F. W. Seward about "negotiations" would merit a retort if there were an independent press, and the state of the times admitted discussion of such matters. The negotiations carried on by Mr. Seward with the Confederate commissioners through Judge Campbell and Judge Nelson will some day, perhaps, be brought to light, and if they were as has been represented to me, Mr. Seward and the Lincoln administration will not be in a position to make sneering observations respecting any negotiations during your administration. It was in reference to these that Jeff Davis in his message spoke with much severity. You no doubt observed his allusion to informal negotiations through a person *holding a high station* in the Government of the United States, and which were participated in by other persons holding stations equally high. I have understood that Judge Campbell was the person alluded to, and that Judge Nelson and, perhaps, Judge Catron were the other persons cognizant of Mr. Seward's assurances respecting the evacuation of Fort Sumter.

Mr. Holt is still here. Judge Black has been absent some weeks, but returned night before last. Mr. Holt stays at home pretty closely, and I have met him very seldom, though I occasionally hear of his visiting some of the Departments. The state of affairs is tolerably well detailed in the public prints. But no description could convey to you the panic that prevailed here for several days after the Baltimore riot, and before communications were reopened. This was increased by reports of the trepidation of Lincoln that were circulated through the streets. Almost every family packed up their effects. Women and children were sent away in great numbers; provisions advanced to famine prices. In a great measure the alarm has passed away, but there

is still a deep apprehension that before long this city is doomed to be the scene of battle and carnage. In respect to military operations going on, or contemplated, little is known until the results are announced in the newspapers. General Scott seems to have *carte blanche*. He is, in fact, the Government, and if his health continues, vigorous measures are anticipated.

For the last few days I have been moving my family, my former residence being made unpleasant by troops and hospitals surrounding me. In the present state of affairs, I do not like to leave home, or I would pay you a visit, but no one knows what may happen any day, or how soon the communications may be again interrupted. Marching and drilling is going on all day in every street. The troops that have arrived here are in general fine-looking, able-bodied, active men, well equipped, and apparently ready and willing for the service in which they are engaged. Your cordial concurrence in the disposition to maintain the Government and resist aggression gives great satisfaction, and I am pleased to observe a letter from you in the *Intelligencer* of this morning.

I beg you to present my compliments to Miss Lane. There are many stories afloat among the ladies in the city that would amuse her, but as they are no doubt told her by lady correspondents, it is needless for me to repeat them. I hope you may continue in the enjoyment of good health, and remain with sincere regard,

Yours truly,

EDWIN M. STANTON.

[TO J. BUCHANAN HENRY.]

(Confidential.)

WHEATLAND, LANCASTER, }  
Friday, May 17, 1861. }

MY DEAR JAMES:—

I have been quite unwell for the last fortnight, during the last week I have been in bed; still, thank God, I believe I am now convalescent, though, as yet I am exceedingly weak. I should be glad to see you here on private and public business, but not if your absence should operate seriously to your prejudice. We should also be happy to see Mr. Schell here. The termination of the late administration ought not to break up the bonds of mutual friendship which it produced. There is no part of my administration which was considered with greater care and pursued with more firmness than that between the 6th November, the day of Mr. Lincoln's election, and the 4th of March last. Although nearly all upon record, the public seem to have forgotten it. It has become necessary now to revive the public memory, and I know of no journal in the country so proper to do this as the *Journal of Commerce*. Mr. Hallock, of that valuable paper (I believe I am correct in spelling the name), has always been a friend. I would thank you to call upon him, present him my kind and grateful regards, and say that with his permission I will send him some documents. There never was a moment of time when

my administration were not ready and willing to reinforce, or attempt to reinforce, and supply Fort Sumter, if Major Anderson had called for such reinforcement or supply. On the 6th of November, when Lincoln was elected, the whole force at my command was just five companies, and neither of them full. They did not exceed in the whole three hundred men. The ——, however, from a spirit of malignity, and supposing that the world may have forgotten the circumstance, takes every occasion to blame me for my supineness; it will soon arrive at the point of denouncing me for not crushing out the rebellion at once, and thus try to make me the author of the war. . . . No extent of abuse, general or particular abuse, that —— could pour out upon me would induce me to prosecute him; but this is an attempt to bring not only my character, but my life into danger by malignant falsehood. It would be one of those great national prosecutions, such as have occurred in this and other countries, necessary to vindicate the character of the Government.

I want you to bring on with you Wheaton's Elements of International Law—the seventh edition, and no other. I see it is published for sale in Boston at \$6, and presume it can be had in New York. If the *Journal of Commerce* publishes a tri-weekly paper, please to have it sent on to me immediately. You might, confidentially and quietly, consult with —— whom it is best to employ to conduct this business in its preliminary stages.\*

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. STANTON TO MR. BUCHANAN]

WASHINGTON, May 19, 1861.

DEAR SIR:—

You will see in the New York papers Judge Campbell's report of the negotiations between himself and Mr. Seward, to which I referred in my letter of last week. They had been related to me by the Judge about the time they closed. Mr. Seward's silence will not relieve him from the imputation of deceit and double-dealing in the minds of many, although I do not believe it can justly be imputed to him. I have no doubt he believed that Sumter would be evacuated as he stated it would be. But the war party overruled him with Lincoln, and he was forced to give up, but could not give up his office. That is a sacrifice no Republican will be apt to make. But this correspondence shows that Mr. Frederick Seward was not in the line of truth when he said that negotiations ceased on the fourth of March. The New York *Evening Post* is very severe on Judge Campbell, and very unjustly so, for the Judge has been as anxiously and patriotically earnest to preserve the Government as any man in the United States, and he has sacrificed more than any Southern man rather than yield to the secessionists. I regret the treatment he has received from Mr. Seward and the *Post*.

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\* His purpose to institute a prosecution for libel was abandoned by the advice of friends.

Nothing new has transpired here since my last letter. I am perfectly convinced that an attack will be made, and a battle fought for this city before long. With sincere regard, I remain,

Yours truly,  
EDWIN M. STANTON.

[MR. HOLT TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

(Confidential.)

WASHINGTON, May 24, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I had the pleasure of receiving yours of the 21st inst. from the hands of Mr. Magraw. I had previously observed with pain notices in the public papers of your illness, and it is therefore with great gratification that I learn you are convalescing, though still confined to your room. I thank you sincerely for your kind invitation to visit Wheatland, and regret much that it is not in my power at once to do so. My engagements, however, are such that I cannot leave Washington for the present, though I hope to be able to see you in the course of the summer.

I would gladly give you any assistance in my power in the preparation of the paper to which you refer, but fear any aid I could render would be of little avail to you. I have preserved no memoranda of the transactions you propose to treat, and although my memory might be trusted as to their substance, it would in all probability be at fault in regard to their details. In reference to the latter, I would rather defer to your own recollection, or to that of other members of the cabinet. As a historical document, I concur with you that the preparation of such a document is a "necessity;" but I cannot perceive that there is any reason for haste in its completion, or any expediency in its early publication. The country is so completely occupied by the fearful and absorbing events occurring and impending, that you could not hope at present to engage its attention. Besides, from what I have observed in the public papers, I cannot discover that your administration is being so assailed upon the points alluded to as to require any elaborate vindication at your hands. . . . I suppose you have seen the prominent Southern papers—including Governor Floyd's organ at Richmond—in which is set forth as his especial glory the aid given to the revolution by the War Department during the year 1860.

You have, I believe, copies of all of Major Anderson's letters, and it may be copies, also, of a part of those received from Fort Pickens. As the fate of the latter fortress is still undetermined, I doubt if the Government would give copies of any correspondence in regard to it. Colonel Anderson's letters and those to him from the Government, during my brief connection with the War Department, formed, I think, a sufficient defence of the policy pursued during that time.

. . . . . I have had two brief but satisfactory interviews with Colonel Anderson. He is thoroughly loyal, and if he ever had any sympathy with the



revolutionists, which I am now far from believing, I think the ferocious spirit in which the siege and cannonade of Sumter were conducted crushed it out of him. We did not discuss at all the policy of your administration in regard to Sumter, but he said in general terms that he was satisfied all that had occurred was providential—that the course pursued had been the means of fixing the eyes of the nation on Sumter, and of awakening to the last degree its anxieties for its fate; so that when it fell its fall proved the instrumentality of arousing the national enthusiasm and loyalty, as we now see them displayed in the eager rush to maintain the honor of the flag. The approval of his course, of which you speak, relates, I presume, to his defence of Sumter. I have not heard that the administration has expressed any formal censure of your policy.

Now that the South has begun an unprovoked and malignant war upon the United States, accompanied by an insolent threat of the capture of Washington, and with an open avowal that the only Southern right now insisted on is the right of dismembering the Republic, I am decidedly in favor of prosecuting the struggle until the citizens of the seceded States shall be made to obey the laws as we obey them. I believe it can be done. It will cost much blood and many millions of treasure, but, if it cost billions, the preservation of such a government would be well worth the expenditure.

With kind remembrances to Miss Lane, I am

Very sincerely your friend,

J. HOLT.

[GENERAL DIX TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

NEW YORK, May 28th, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Ever since I wrote you last I have been busy night and day, and am a good deal worn down by my labors on the Union Defence Committee, and by superintending the organization and equipment of nine regiments, six of which I have sent to the field, leaving three to go to-morrow and the day after. The post of Major General of Volunteers was tendered to me by Governor Morgan, and I could not decline without subjecting myself to the imputation of hauling down my flag, a thing altogether inadmissible. So I am in harness for the war, though the administration take it easy, for I have not yet been accepted, and there are rumors that there are too many Democratic epaulettes in the field. There seems to be no fear at Washington that there are too many Democratic knapsacks. New York has about 15,000 men at the seat of war, without a general except Sanford, who has gone on temporarily. How is it, my dear sir, that New York is always overlooked (or nearly always) except when there are burdens to be borne? As to this Generalship, it was unsought, and I am indifferent about it entirely. I am willing to give my strength and my life, if need be, to uphold the Government against treason and rebellion. But if the administration prefers some one else to command New York troops, no one will acquiesce half so cheerfully as myself.

I should be very glad if I could look in upon you, though it were but for a moment; but if I am ordered South, I suppose I shall be needed at once. My whole division will be in the field by Sunday next.

Miss Lane has not made her promised visit. I will merely suggest the inviolability of promises by keeping my own. I engaged to send her a photograph for her second album, and beg to give her, through you, the choice of a variety. I beg also to be most cordially remembered to her. Our excellent friend, Mr. ———, wanted a note or letter of Major Anderson's, written at Fort Sumter, and I take the liberty, not knowing his address, to send it to you.

I fear the impatience of the country may interfere with General Scott's plan of getting a large force on foot, disciplining it thoroughly until October, and then embodying it, and marching through the Southern country in such numbers as to render resistance vain. Partisan movements without any definite result only serve to irritate and excite to new effort.

I am, my dear sir, with best wishes, in which my wife unites,

Sincerely and faithfully your friend,

JOHN A. DIX.

[MR. STANTON TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

WASHINGTON, June 8, 1861.

DEAR SIR:—

Your friends here are very much gratified by Judge Black's report of improvement in your health. The accounts we have had occasioned a great deal of solicitude concerning you; but I trust that you may now be speedily restored. I have not written to you for some time because there was nothing to communicate that would cheer or gratify you. While every patriot has rejoiced at the enthusiastic spirit with which the nation has aroused to maintain its existence and honor, the speculation and fraud that immediately spring up to prey upon the volunteers and grasp the public money as plunder and spoil has created a strong feeling of loathing and disgust. And no sooner had the appearance of imminent danger passed away, and the administration recovered from its panic, than a determination became manifest to give a strict party direction, as far as possible, to the great national movement. After a few Democratic appointments, as Butler and Dix, everything else has been exclusively devoted to Black Republican interests. This has already excited a strong reactionary feeling, not only in New York, but in the Western States. General Dix informs me that he has been so badly treated by Cameron, and so disgusted by the general course of the administration, that he intends immediately to resign. This will be followed by a withdrawal of financial confidence and support to a very great extent. Indeed, the course of things for the last four weeks has been such as to excite distrust in every Department of the Government. The military movements, or rather inaction, also excite great apprehension. It is believed that Davis and Beauregard are both in this vicinity—one at Harper's Ferry, the other at Manassas Gap—and that they can concentrate over sixty thousand troops. Our whole force does not exceed

forty-five thousand. It is also reported that discord exists between the cabinet and General Scott in respect to important points of strategy. Our condition, therefore, seems to be one of even greater danger than at any former period, for the consequence of success by the secessionists would be far more extensive and irremediable than if the Capital had been seized weeks ago. Ould is reported as having gone off and joined the secessionists. Harvey, the new minister to Spain, it is discovered, was a correspondent with the secessionists and communicated the designs and operations of the Government to Judge McGrath. It is supposed he will be recalled. Cassius Clay has been playing the fool at London by writing letters to the *Times*, which that paper treats with ridicule and contempt. The impression here is that the decided and active countenance and support of the British government will be given to the Southern Confederacy. Mr. Holt is still here, but I seldom see him. Judge Black is also here. I should have visited you, but dare not leave town even for one night. Our troops have slept on their arms nearly every night for a week, anticipating attack. Hoping to hear of your restoration to good health, I remain as ever,

Truly yours,

EDWIN M. STANTON.

[MR. STANTON TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

WASHINGTON, June 12, 1861.

DEAR SIR:—

I had written to you the day before your letter was received, and am very glad to learn that your health is still improving. Shortly after the 4th of March, I saw Mr. Weaver, and told him to let me know in case there should appear any disposition to interfere with him, and I would exert myself to have him retained. He expressed himself so confidently of his security, that any interposition of mine would have appeared gratuitous, if not impertinent. But before your last letter reached here, he called and said he had been removed. He said he did not desire to be reinstated in it, preferring to enter the military service, and desiring a captain's commission. While I think his restoration might be accomplished, the other is more doubtful, as it is generally understood that Mr. Cameron has bestowed all the military posts. I shall, however, do all in my power to accomplish what Mr. Weaver desires, on account of the interest you take in his welfare.

We have this morning disastrous news from Fortress Monroe. The rumor is that the sacrifice of life at Bethel Bridge was very great, and it is in a great measure attributed to the incompetence of the commanding officer. There is much reason to fear that other disasters from similar cause will occur. The recent appointments in the army are generally spoken of with great disapprobation. General Dix is very much chagrined with the treatment he has received from the War Department, and on Saturday I had a letter declaring his intention to resign immediately. He would, in my opinion, be a serious

loss to the service. The rumored appointment of Cummings, of *The Bulletin*, as Brigadier General and Quartermaster General, has produced very general dissatisfaction and distrust. The appointment has been announced as having been certainly made, but I do not believe that it has been.

I had a letter this week from your friend General Harney. He feels himself very badly treated by the administration. Last month he was ordered to Washington without any reason but suspicion of his loyalty. Being satisfied on that point, he was restored to his command, and is now again superseded, without any explanation, and is disgraced by being left without any command.

Since this letter was commenced, the brother of General Butler has arrived from Fort Monroe, and reports the whole loss of our troops at fourteen killed and forty-four wounded. This is so greatly below the former reports, which set down our loss at over one thousand, that it affords great relief. There is great anxiety to hear from Harper's Ferry. The movement in that direction a few days ago you have no doubt seen in the papers. Much apprehension is felt here as to the expedition, and there is some uneasiness lest an attack on this city will be induced by withdrawal of so large a portion of the military force. Harvey's treachery is much talked of. The foreign indications by yesterday's steamer are considered more favorable than heretofore.

I beg you to present my compliments to Miss Lane; and with sincere regard I remain,

Yours truly,

EDWIN M. STANTON.

[MR. STANTON TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

WASHINGTON, June 20, 1861.

DEAR SIR:—

On the day that my last letter was written, I had an interview with Secretary Smith, in relation to Mr. Weaver, and explained to him the nature of the service you had rendered to Mr. Lincoln, and also the engagement that Mr. Doolittle had made *after* that service had been rendered, and as an expression of his sense of the obligation. Mr. Doolittle had also placed a letter on file, as he promised to do, but not making any explanation. I am gratified to learn this morning that Mr. Weaver has been restored to his clerkship, and also that he has received an appointment as first lieutenant in the army, for which I applied on his behalf. You will no doubt be pleased that the administration has properly appreciated the favor you rendered.

Hoping that your health is still improving, I remain,

Yours truly,

EDWIN M. STANTON.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. HALLOCK.]

(Private.)

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, June 29, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR :—

My nephew, J. Buchanan Henry, informed me of the very satisfactory conversation with you some time since. I should have written to you some time ago but for my long illness. Since I have been able to write, I have been making memoranda so as to present in one connected view the acts of my administration since the troubles commenced in South Carolina. When presented (but the proper time has not, I think, arrived), they will, unless I am greatly mistaken, prove to be a triumphant vindication in every particular.

In the mean time, it is asked why I did not nip this great revolution in its bud, by garrisoning the forts in the Southern States and sending reinforcements to Forts Moultrie, Sumter and Castle Pinckney, in the harbor of Charleston. I shall let General Scott answer this question. I send you a copy of his "Views," addressed to the War Department, and finally published at length, doubtless under his own authority, in the *National Intelligencer* of January 18th, 1861. They are dated on the 29th and 30th October, 1860, more than a week before the Presidential election. After reading them, you will admit that they constitute an extraordinary document. Indeed, they tend to prove what has been often said of the gallant General, that when he abandons the sword for the pen he makes sad work of it. They were extensively published and commented upon in the South, but attracted but little attention in the North. My present purpose, however, is only to prove from them the utter impossibility of garrisoning these forts.

You will observe that on the 29th October, he enumerates nine of them in six of the Southern States; but he submits no plan for this purpose, and designates no troops to accomplish this great and extensive military operation. This it was his duty to do as Lieutenant General. In writing, the next day, October 30th, he seems to have been struck with the absurdity of the recommendation. In this supplement he states: "There is one regular company at Boston, one here at the Narrows, one at Portsmouth, one at Augusta, Ga., and one at Baton Rouge, in all, five companies only within reach to garrison or reinforce the forts mentioned in the 'Views.'" Five companies containing less than 400 men to garrison and reinforce nine fortifications scattered over six of the Southern States!

Nearly the whole of our small army were at the time stationed on the remote frontiers of our extensive country to protect the inhabitants and emigrants against the tomahawk and scalping knife of the savage; and at the approach of winter, could not have been brought within reach for several months. They were employed for this purpose as they had been for years. At the period when our fortifications were erected, it was not contemplated that they should be garrisoned, except in the event of a foreign war, and this to avoid

the necessity of raising a large standing army. No person then dreamed of danger to the States. It is a remarkable fact, that after months had elapsed, and we had, at the instance of General Scott, scoured the whole country for forces to protect the inauguration, all the troops we could assemble at Washington, rank and file, amounted to six hundred and thirty. This fact is stated by me in a message to the House of Representatives. To have sent four hundred men to Charleston after the Presidential election to garrison and defend three forts, an arsenal, a custom house, navy yard, and post office, would have only been to provoke collision. I believed that the public property was safer without than it would have been with such an utterly inadequate force. Besides, whoever was in Washington at the time must have witnessed the strong expression of sentiment by the other Southern States against any attack by South Carolina against the public property. For the reason it was not their policy to make the attack. In my message, therefore, of the 3d December, I stated: "It is not believed that any attempt will be made to expel the United States from this property by force." In this belief I was justified by the event—as there was no trouble until after Major Anderson retired from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter, as he had a right to do, first having spiked his cannon and burnt the gun carriages.

But I am proceeding beyond what I had intended, which was to state the possibility of reinforcing the forts with the troops "within reach." There are other very important questions arising out of these transactions which, for the present, I forbear to touch. They will all appear in due time. The *Journal of Commerce*, from its very great ability and prudent character, exercises great influence over the country. I do not intend, for the present, to appear, either directly or indirectly, as an author. I have merely deemed it advisable to recall your attention to facts, all of which are of record, so that you might, if you should think it advisable, be able to answer the question: Why did the late President not send troops to the forts at Charleston and the other Southern forts? I send you a copy of my message in pamphlet form, from which I have never departed.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[GENERAL DIX TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

WASHINGTON, June 28, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

It is with great gratification that I am assured, from several sources, that your health is improving. I was not aware, until I received your letter, that you had been so ill, for I place but little reliance on what the newspapers say.

After a long delay I received my appointment as Major General. The President, whom I saw the day before yesterday, assured me that it was not intentional, and that he had no other purpose than to appoint me. I shall enter on my active duties in a few days.

Everything is quiet in this city. As late as last evening the enemy was

also quiet, and, I think, has no intention of advancing. The weather is very warm, as it always is here in June, and the season for active operations will soon be over, until after the first frost.

I hope Miss Lane is well, and that your health may be completely restored. I beg you to give her my kind regards, and to accept assurances of my sincere respect. I am, dear Sir,

Unchangeably your friend,

JOHN A. DIX.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. KING.]

(Private.)

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, July 13, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

My late severe illness has hitherto prevented me from acknowledging the receipt of your kind letter of May last. Rest assured that this delay did not proceed from any want of regard for you or your family. On the contrary, I shall ever cherish the most friendly feelings and ardent wishes for the prosperity of both. I should be glad to hear from you as often as may be convenient, and, although I recover my strength but slowly, I think I may promise to be a more punctual correspondent.

The future of our country presents a dark cloud, through which my vision cannot penetrate. The assault upon Fort Sumter was the commencement of war by the Confederate States, and no alternative was left but to prosecute it with vigor on our part. Up and until all social and political relations ceased between the secession leaders and myself, I had often warned them that the North would rise to a man against them if such an assault were made. No alternative seems now to be left but to prosecute hostilities until the seceding States shall return to their allegiance, or until it shall be demonstrated that this object, which is nearest my heart, cannot be accomplished. From present appearances it seems certain that they would accept no terms of compromise short of an absolute recognition of their independence, which is impossible. I am glad that General Scott does not underrate the strength of his enemy, which would be a great fault in a commander. With all my heart and soul I wish him success. I think that some very unfit military appointments have been made, from which we may suffer in some degree in the beginning, but ere long merit will rise to its appropriate station. It was just so at the commencement of the war of 1812. I was rejoiced at the appointment of General Dix, and believe he will do both himself and the country honor.

In passing North or South, I should be most happy if you would call and pay us a visit at Wheatland. You shall receive a most hearty welcome, especially if you should be accompanied by your lady and Miss King.

With my kindest regards to them, I remain, very respectfully,

Your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

P. S.—Miss Lane desires to be kindly remembered to Mr., Mrs. and Miss King.

[MR. STANTON TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

WASHINGTON, July 16, 1861.

DEAR SIR:—

Your favor with the continuation of the historical sketch was duly received. Last evening Judge Black and General Dix met at my house, and we consulted together in regard to it. We concur in opinion that a publication at present would accomplish no good. The public mind is too much excited on other topics to give attention to the past, and it would only afford occasion for fresh malignant attacks upon you from ———. His day, I think, is rapidly passing; and, at all events, a stronger impression will hereafter be produced when the public feeling is more tranquil. The narrative appears to me to be a clear and accurate statement of the events of the period to which it relates, with one exception of no material consequence, in respect to which the recollection of Judge Black, General Dix and myself is somewhat different from the statement. Speaking of the order to the Brooklyn not to disembark the forces sent to Pickens unless that fort were attacked, you mention it as having been made with the entire unanimity of your cabinet and the approval of General Scott. That he approved it is fully shown by Mr. Holt's note to you; but our recollection is that in the cabinet it was opposed by Judge Black, General Dix and myself. I do not know that there is now any reason to question the wisdom of the measure; it may have saved Pickens from immediate attack at that time; and I have understood that General Scott says that Pickens could not have been successfully defended if it had then been attacked, and that he speaks of this as a blunder of the Confederates. In this view the wisdom of the measure is fully vindicated; and at the time it was supported by the Secretary of War and Secretary of the Navy, to whose Departments the subject appertained.

So far, however, as your administration is concerned, its policy in reference to both Sumter and Pickens is fully vindicated by the course of the present administration for forty days after the inauguration of Lincoln. No use was made of the means that had been prepared for reinforcing Sumter. A Republican Senator informed me a short time ago that General Scott personally urged him to consent to the evacuation of both Sumter and Pickens; and it is a fact of general notoriety, published in all the papers at the time and never contradicted, that not only the General, but other military men who were consulted, were in favor of that measure.

Whatever may be said by ———'s malignity now, I think that the public will be disposed to do full justice to your efforts to avert the calamity of civil war; and every month for a long time to come will, I am afraid, furnish fresh evidence of the magnitude of that calamity. The impression that Mr. Weaver had received an army appointment proved to be a mistake; it was another Weaver who was appointed. General Dix is still here. He has been shamefully treated by the administration. We are expecting a general battle to be commenced at Fairfax to-day, and conflicting opinions of the result are entertained. With sincere regard, I remain as ever, Truly yours,

EDWIN M. STANTON.



[MR. STANTON TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

WASHINGTON, July 26, 1861.

DEAR SIR:—

Three days ago I received the enclosed letters, under cover addressed to me. Upon reading the first sentence, I perceived there must be some mistake, and turning over the leaf saw that the address was to Judge Black, and I therefore return them unread. I should have handed them to him, but have not seen him since they were received, and am informed that he left here some days ago.

The dreadful disaster of Sunday can scarcely be mentioned. The imbecility of this administration culminated in that catastrophe; an irretrievable misfortune and national disgrace never to be forgotten are to be added to the ruin of all peaceful pursuits and national bankruptcy, as the result of Lincoln's "running the machine" for five months.

You perceive that Bennett is for a change of the cabinet, and proposes for one of the new cabinet Mr. Holt, whose opposition to Bennett's appointment was bitter and intensely hostile. It is not unlikely that some change in the War and Navy Departments may take place, but none beyond those two Departments until Jeff Davis turns out the whole concern. The capture of Washington seems now to be inevitable; during the whole of Monday and Tuesday it might have been taken without any resistance. The rout, overthrow, and utter demoralization of the whole army is complete. Even now I doubt whether any serious opposition to the entrance of the Confederate forces could be offered. While Lincoln, Scott, and the cabinet are disputing who is to blame, the city is unguarded, and the enemy at hand. General McClellan reached here last evening. But if he had the ability of Cæsar, Alexander, or Napoleon, what can he accomplish? Will not Scott's jealousy, cabinet intrigues, and Republican interference thwart him at every step? While hoping for the best, I cannot shut my eyes against the dangers that beset the Government, and especially this city. It is certain that Davis was in the field on Sunday, and the secessionists here assert that he headed in person the last victorious charge. General Dix is in Baltimore; after three weeks' neglect and insult he was sent there. The warm debate between Douglas's friend Richardson and Kentucky Burnett has attracted some interest, but has been attended with no bellicose result. Since this note was commenced, the morning paper has come in, and I see that McClellan did not arrive last night, as I was informed he had. General Lee was after him, but will have to wait a while before they can meet.

Yours truly,

EDWIN M. STANTON.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. LEIPER.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, August 31, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I am sorry that any cause has prevented you from paying me a visit. I trust your kind purpose will not be long suspended. The memory of your

last visit causes Miss Lane and myself to be anxious that it should be repeated. I rejoice to learn that you and yours are all in good health. May this precious blessing be long continued to you and them.

I agree with you that nothing but a vigorous prosecution of the war can now determine the question between the North and the South. It is vain to talk of peace at the present moment. The Confederate States, flushed with their success at Bull's Run, would consent to nothing less than a recognition of their independence, and this is impossible to grant under any conceivable circumstances. I have much faith that General McClellan is "the coming man."

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[HON. RICHARD COBDEN TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

MIDHURST, SUSSEX, Sept. 5, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

It is rather more than two years since I had the pleasure of seeing you, and in that interval, what events have occurred!

I think it is no exaggeration to say that there are few Americans who have been more deeply and painfully interested than myself in the deplorable civil conflict which is now raging on your continent.

The subject is so distressing to my feelings, that I avoid as much as possible all correspondence with my American friends. But after the friendly reception which I experienced from you at Washington, I should be sorry if our intimacy were to be impaired owing to any neglect on my part. I have been abroad nearly the whole time since my return from the States, chiefly in France and Algiers, but am now settled down at home. My health is improved, and if I can be quiet and avoid public meetings, I hope to continue to escape from a return of my bronchial affection.

I hope you are well, and that you will be good enough to let me hear from you. Or if you cannot find time to write, pray let me have a letter from my amiable young friend, your niece, to whom I beg to be most kindly remembered.

I will not enter on the subject of your domestic troubles. My experience in our Crimean war led me to the conclusion that from the moment when the first drop of blood is shed reason and argument are powerless to put an end to war. It can only be terminated by its own self-destroying and exhaustive process.

This, however, I will say, that of all the questions ever subjected to the ordeal of battle, that which is the ground of quarrel between the Northern and Southern States of your Union seems the least adapted for the arbitrament of the sword.

I feel very anxious that nothing should arise to put in jeopardy the relations between England and your country.

I remember listening with great satisfaction to General Cass, whilst I was at Washington, when he narrated to me the satisfactory settlement of the

various questions in debate between the two countries, and I will venture to offer the opinion that history will do justice to the successful foreign policy of your administration. (It would be very presumptuous in me, a foreigner, to pass judgment on your internal policy.)

Should it happen that you are in communication with General Cass, will you kindly remember me to him?

The subject of the blockade is becoming more and more serious. I am afraid we have ourselves to blame for not having placed the question of belligerent rights on a better footing. I remember that after the Congress of Paris had agreed to abolish privateering, Mr. Marcy proposed to go a step further, and exempt private property altogether from capture. This was objected to, I believe, by our government; afterwards, I remember, your newspapers advocated the abolition of blockades altogether. I have the impression that your government, I mean your Presidency, would have agreed to the Paris declaration, with the addition of a clause for making private property (not contraband of war) sacred at sea, and another clause doing away with blockades altogether, excepting as regards articles contraband of war—am I correct in this supposition?

Mr. Bright is well, but, like myself, feels your civil war almost with the sorrow of a private affliction.

Mr. Milner Gibson is on a yachting excursion. He has grown a little stouter and somewhat grey with the cares of office.

Believe me, yours very sincerely,

R. COBDEN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO HON. GEORGE G. LEIPER.]

WHEATLAND, September 4th, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have this morning received your favor of yesterday. I rejoice to learn that when you visit me you will be accompanied by two of your granddaughters; and the sooner the better. We shall give you and them a most cordial welcome.

In regard to any public use of the opinions expressed in my letter, in favor of the prosecution of the war, I would rather, for the present, you would withhold them. Of course I have kept no copy and know not how they are expressed. Every person who has conversed with me knows that I am in favor of sustaining the Government in a vigorous prosecution of the war for the restoration of the Union. An occasion may offer when it may be proper for me authoritatively to express this opinion for the public. Until that time shall arrive, I desire to avoid any public exhibition.

When a private letter of mine was published some time since, condemning the desertion of the flag by the officers of the army and the navy, you know it was made the occasion to abuse me by the Black Republican papers.

Knowing our relations of intimate friendship, it would be said that we had concocted a plan to bring me before the public in self-defence in an indirect manner.

Ever your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[JUDGE BLACK TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

WASHINGTON, September 9th, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

There seems to be a dead pause here in everything but making appointments and contracts. If there is to be a battle, nobody knows it, not even those who are to fight it, unless by conjecture. But it is not easy to see how it can be avoided very long. The ground that Beauregard leaves McClellan to stand upon is getting narrower every day. But each has a wholesome fear of the other. It is terrible enough to think of the momentous interests at stake upon the issue. And that issue may be determined by the state of the weather, the condition of the ground, or the slightest blunder of an officer.

Mrs. Gwynn, it seems, was not arrested. I told you I did not believe either that she had been arrested or given the cause of accusation which was alleged against her. It was another lady of the same name—Mrs. Gwynn of Alexandria—who sewed up plans and documents in shirts, unless, indeed, the whole story is a fable invented by that “perfectly reliable gentleman” who has been engaged in furnishing lies for the newspapers as far back as I can remember.

Mr. Glossbrenner furnished me a fair copy of the *paper* before I left York. I shall soon have it in shape. I have already made some progress in it.

My regards to Miss Lane, and believe me

Yours truly,

J. S. BLACK.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO DR. JOHN B. BLAKE.]

WHEATLAND, September 12th, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your kind favor of the 7th instant, and owe you many thanks for it, as well as for Mr. Stanton's report. It puts to rest the assertion that a single columbiad or cannon ever reached the Southern States in 1860 or 1861, and they are not fighting us with our own weapons. Floyd's order was arrested before its execution. About the small arms, there does not appear to be any thing out of the usual course of administration and distribution. They were ordered there so long ago as December, 1859.

I have never received the bound copies of the Public Documents of the 35th Congress, though I recollect that Mr. Glossbrenner or some other person told me before I left Washington that Mr. Wheeler was boxing them up for me. I expect to see Mr. G. in a few days, and shall inquire of him.

I owe you very many thanks for the order you have obtained from Mr. Smith for the documents of the 36th Congress; and please to present my kind regards to Mr. Kelly.

We must, I presume, soon hear of a battle or of a retreat of the Confederate forces. Our all is embarked on board a ship which is approaching the breakers. This is no time to investigate why she was brought into this sad condition. We must save her by an united effort. We must prosecute the war with the utmost vigor. May God grant us a safe deliverance and a restoration of the Union!

Miss Lane desires to be most kindly remembered to you.

Your friend always,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

P. S.—Pardon me for having omitted to acknowledge your favor of the 8th August, in answer to mine of the 5th. General Twiggs has sent me another insolent and threatening letter, in which he exults in the fact that my likeness had been ordered from the Rotunda. I know not now what will become of it. It is condemned as a likeness by good judges.\*

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. KING.]

WHEATLAND, September 18, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I am gratified to learn, by your favor of the 13th, that your visit here was agreeable to yourself and Miss King, and we, therefore, trust that it may be soon repeated. I need not say that both Miss Lane and myself will be most happy to see you both again, and give you a cordial welcome.

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\* [MR. HOLT TO MR. WM. B. REED.]

(Private.)

WASHINGTON, September 16th, 1863.

DEAR SIR:—

I did not at once reply to your note of the 11th instant, because of a belief that a copy of the order dismissing Twiggs would answer your purpose. Learning, however, from a telegram in the hands of Doctor Blake that you prefer I shall respond formally to your inquiry, I have done so. Should you make any public use of this communication, I beg that you will see personally to a correction of the proofs.

If you will examine Mr. Buchanan's correspondence you will probably find one or more abusive letters from Twiggs on the subject of his dismissal. They might assist you in establishing "the truth of history."

Very respectfully your obedient servant,

J. HOLT.

P. S.—The Government did all in its power to protect itself from Twigg's meditated treachery by relieving him from his command, *as soon as its apprehensions in regard to him were excited*, and if it failed it was because, owing to the disturbed condition of the country, the order was slow in reaching him, and because when it did reach him, availing himself of the temporary absence of his successor, *he disobeyed the order and surrendered a Department of which he had no longer the command.*

J. H.

You recollect the correspondence between Mr. Holt and Mr. Thompson. The last letter of Mr. Thompson to Mr. Holt was published in the tri-weekly *National Intelligencer* of March 19th, 1861, and was dated at Oxford on March 11th. Mr. Holt, I believe, replied to this letter; but, if so, I cannot find his reply in the *Intelligencer*. I should be much obliged to you if you could procure me a copy of this reply. Poor Thompson! He committed a sad wrong against his country, from which he can never recover. He had been the devoted friend and admirer of Mr. Holt, but in the end he afforded just cause to that gentleman for his severe answer.

How Mr. Holt came to be so far mistaken, in his letter of May 31st to Kentucky, as to state that the revolutionary leaders greeted me with all hails to my face, I do not know. The truth is that, after the message of the 3d of December, they were alienated from me; and, after I had returned the insolent letter of the first South Carolina commissioners to them, I was attacked by Jefferson Davis and his followers on the floor of the Senate, and all political and social intercourse between us ceased. Had the Senate confirmed my nomination of the 2d January of a collector of the port of Charleston, the war would probably have commenced in January, instead of May. I am collecting materials for history, and I cannot find a note from Mr. Slidell to myself and my answer relative to the very proper removal of Beauregard from West Point.\*

I think I must have given them to Mr. Holt. He was much pleased with my answer at the time. If they are in his possession, I should be glad you would procure me copies. They are very brief. The ladies of Mr. S.'s family never after looked near the White House.

I think I can perceive in the public mind a more fixed, resolute and determined purpose than ever to prosecute the war to a successful termination, with all the men and means in our power. Enlistments are now proceeding much more rapidly than a few weeks ago, and I am truly glad of it. The time has passed for offering compromises and terms of peace to the seceded States. We well know that, under existing circumstances, they would accept of nothing less than a recognition of their independence, which it is impossible we should grant. There is a time for all things under the sun; but surely this is not the moment for paralyzing the arm of the national administration by a suicidal conflict among ourselves, but for bold, energetic and united action. The Democratic party has ever been devoted to the Constitution and the Union; and I rejoice that, among the many thousands that have rushed to their defence in this the hour of peril, a large majority belong to that time-honored party.

I sat down to write you a few lines, but find that my letter has swelled into large proportions.

From your friend, very respectfully,  
JAMES BUCHANAN.

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\* See the correspondence, *ante*.

[FROM JOSHUA BATES.]

LONDON, September 20, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have to thank you for your valued letters of the 12th and 13th ult., which I have read with great interest. I think you give too much importance to newspaper attacks. Judging by my own feelings, I should say readers of newspapers do not believe a word of these attacks, but put them down to party tactics. Lord Palmerston, in the last session of Parliament, in answering a speech of Mr. Horsman, who complained that the *Times* had abused him and ridiculed his speeches, remarked, that he always thought that he (Lord P.) was the best abused of any man in the Kingdom, but he was not disturbed by it. A gentleman once applied to Lord Melbourne for advice whether he should accept a seat in the cabinet which was offered him. Lord M. said: "If you do not mind being abused daily in the newspapers, you will find office very pleasant; but if your happiness is at all disturbed by such abuse, you had best not take office." Gallatin's theory was that no man ever did his duty that was not abused by the newspapers. I never had a doubt that you would execute the high duties of the office of President of the United States with honor to yourself and great advantage to the country; and I feel sure that your great public services will be approved by the country at no distant day. It was shameful that Congress should leave you without the power to stop the rebellion before it had become so formidable. I have, however, full faith in the patriotism of the people of the free States; that they will punish rebels, and preserve the Constitution, I have no doubt. Secession is out of the question. Who would ever lend money to a Government of the United States, if aware that it could be broken up any day by a right of any State to secede? This government will, I think, do nothing more. The want of cotton will be severely felt at Manchester the coming winter. By that time I hope the Southern States will give in. The remittance by Miss Lane, to whom, pray, give my kind regards, has been placed to her credit, and subject to her orders, in the books of Baring Brothers & Co. (£2,000), subject to interest at 4 per cent. per annum.

I remain, my dear Sir, with the highest respect,

Very truly yours,

JOSHUA BATES.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO A COMMITTEE OF THE CITIZENS OF CHESTER AND LANCASTER COUNTIES.]

WHEATLAND, September 28, 1861.

DEAR SIR:—

I have been honored by your kind invitation, as Chairman of the appropriate committee, to attend and address a Union meeting of the citizens of Chester and Lancaster counties, to be held at Hagersville on the first of October. This I should gladly accept, proceeding as it does from a much

valued portion of my old Congressional district, but advancing years and the present state of my health render it impossible.

You correctly estimate the deep interest which I feel "in common with the citizens who will there be assembled, in the present condition of our country." This is, indeed, serious, but our recent military reverses, so far from producing despondency in the minds of a loyal and powerful people, will only animate them to more mighty exertions in sustaining a war which has become inevitable by the assault of the Confederate States upon Fort Sumter. For this reason, were it possible for me to address your meeting, waiving all other topics, I should confine myself to a solemn and earnest appeal to my countrymen, and especially those without families, to volunteer for the war, and join the many thousands of brave and patriotic volunteers who are already in the field.

This is the moment for action; for PROMPT, ENERGETIC and UNITED action; and not for discussion of PEACE PROPOSITIONS. These, we must know, would be rejected by the States that have seceded, unless we should offer to recognize their independence, which is entirely out of the question. Better counsels may hereafter prevail, when these people shall be convinced that the war is conducted, not for their conquest or subjugation, but solely for the purpose of bringing them back to their original position in the Union, without impairing, in the slightest degree, any of their Constitutional rights. Whilst, therefore, we shall cordially hail their return under our common and glorious flag, and welcome them as brothers, yet, until that happy day shall arrive, it will be our duty to support the President with all the men and means at the command of the country, in a vigorous and successful prosecution of the war.

Yours very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[TO J. BUCHANAN HENRY.]

WHEATLAND, October 21, 1861.

MY DEAR JAMES:—

I have mislaid your last letter, and have not answered it sooner, awaiting information that my account had been settled and the balance struck in the Chemical Bank. I think there would be no risk, and if so, no danger in sending a bank book or the certificate of loan by mail. I believe that New York Loan is registered, and without coupons—but there is no hurry in either case.

I am determined to sell all my seceded State bonds this fall for what they will bring. North Carolinas will probably command \$60, and I would sell at that price to-morrow, but dislike to send the certificates by mail. These loans may rise or sink in the market, as the Bulls or the Bears may prevail; but after the war is over, let it terminate as it may, these States will be so exhausted as not to be able to pay, be they never so willing. As you sometimes deal in stocks, I give you this *confidentially* as my opinion.



We have never heard a word from or of our good friend Schell since he left us. How is he? or what has become of him?

I think it is now time that I should not merely defend but triumphantly vindicate myself, or cause myself to be vindicated before the public, though my friends still urge me to wait.

I believe it is universally believed that Floyd stole guns and sent them to the South. There is not a word of truth in it, as is proved by a report of the Committee on Military Affairs to the House of Representatives on the 18th February last, Mr. Stanton, a Black Republican, being chairman. It is true that at a late period of the administration, Floyd made the attempt to send a considerable number of columbiads and thirty-two pounders to Ship Island and Galveston, but I arrested the order, through the Secretary of War, before a single gun was sent.

We are expecting Mrs. Roosevelt, and I shall be delighted to see her, though we shall not be able to entertain her as I could desire. I have never at any period since I commenced housekeeping, been able to get a good cook, or even a tolerably good one, except at Washington, and we now have one of the worst. We shall, however, give her a hearty welcome.

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

P. S.—For what price can New York Loan be obtained in the market? Have the Messrs. O'Brien my Virginia certificate in their possession? The Confederates have not confiscated State loans in their infamous act, and I presume there would be no difficulty in assigning it.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. KING.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, November 12, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

You will confer a great favor upon me if you can obtain a half-dozen of copies of Mr. Stanton's report from the Committee on Military Affairs, made on the 18th February, 1861 (No. 85), relative to the arms alleged to have been stolen and sent to the South by Floyd. This report, with the remarks of Mr. Stanton when presenting it, ought to have put this matter at rest, and it did so, I believe, so far as Congress was concerned. It has, however, been recently repeated by Cameron, Reverdy Johnson and others, and I desire these copies to send to different parts of the Union, so that the falsehood may be refuted by the record. I am no further interested in the matter than, if the charge were true, it might argue a want of vigilance on my part.

I perceive that Mr. Holt has got a . . . from the Secretary of War, and I learn from those who read Forney's *Press* that Stanton is the counsel and friend of McClellan, who is, I trust and hope, "the coming man."

By the bye, it is difficult to imagine how it was possible to mystify so plain a subject, under the laws of war, as an exchange of prisoners with the rebels,

so as to make it mean a recognition in any form, however remote, of their Confederacy. It admits nothing but that your enemy, whether pirate, rebel, Algerine or regular government, has got your soldiers in his possession, and you have his soldiers in your possession. The exchange means nothing beyond. The laws of humanity are not confined to any other limit. The more barbarous and cruel the enemy, the greater is the necessity for an exchange; because the greater is the danger that they will shed the blood of your soldiers. I do not apply this remark to the Confederate States, and only use it by way of illustration. I believe they have not treated their prisoners cruelly.

They do not seem to understand at Washington another plain principle of the law of nations, and that is, that whilst the capture and confiscation of private property at sea is still permissible, this is not the case on land. Such are all the authorities. The Treaty of Ghent recognized slaves as private property, and therefore they were to be restored; and we paid for all our army consumed in Mexico. The rebels have violated this law in the most reckless manner.

But why am I writing so? I have materials put together which will constitute, unless I am greatly mistaken, not merely a good defence, but a triumphant vindication of my administration. You must not be astonished some day to find in print, portraits drawn by myself of all those who ever served in my cabinet. I think I know them all perfectly, unless it may be Stanton.

I hope Miss King has entirely recovered. Please present me to her very kindly, as well as to Mrs. King. I am now alone, Miss Lane being in New York; but thank God! I am tranquil and contented, sound, or nearly so, in body, and I trust sound in mind, and ever true to my friends.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[GENERAL DIX TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

BALTIMORE, December 2, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I enclose you a proclamation, rather out of date, but not the less valuable, I trust, for having been sent out on the very day John Cochrane proclaimed the infamous and cowardly scheme of arming slaves against their masters.

I believe every State north of South Carolina and Mississippi may be reclaimed by a just and enlightened policy. The abolitionists will make a powerful effort to drag the country into the emancipation of slaves. But I am confident they will fail. Fortunately this project cannot be separated from the support of Fremont, and it will for that reason, I think, be condemned by the friends of the administration.

The *Herald* said my proclamation was inspired by the President. I do not yet know whether he approves it. It was put forth without consulting any one. I knew I was right; and when this conviction is strong, I never consult friends, for fear they may differ with me.

It has been a source of great gratification to me to hear, as I have frequently from Mr. Magraw, of your improved health. That you may live to see this unhappy contest ended, and good fellowship restored again is the sincere wish of, dear sir, yours very respectfully and truly,

JOHN A. DIX.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MISS LANE.]

WHEATLAND, December 2, 1861.

MY DEAR HARRIET:—

I have received your letters of the 20th and 30th ultimo, and in compliance with the request in the latter return you Judge Black's opinion. I have heard nothing from him since his call on the way to York after parting from you at the Continental.

I hope you are enjoying yourself. Indeed this cannot fail to be the case with such a charming lady as Mrs. Roosevelt. We get along very comfortably and pleasantly at Wheatland. I received a letter yesterday from Annie Buchanan offering to pay me a visit; but I advised her to defer it until after your return. Indeed this would be no place for her at present. I wish you, however, to remain at New York just as long as you find it agreeable.

I am glad to learn that Judge Nelson believes that Captain Wilkes can be sustained by public law in the seizure of Mason and Slidell. I place great reliance upon his judgment, but at the first we shall probably receive a terrific broadside from the English journals.

The more I saw of the Misses Johnston, I liked them the better. They are fine women.

I often see the Nevins and am glad of it. I dine to-day at Harry Magraw's. The dinner is given to Bishop Wood.

With my kindest regards to the Judge and Mrs. Roosevelt, I remain

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. KING.]

WHEATLAND, December 10, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received a package directed in your well-known hand; and upon opening it discover a letter directed to Miss Lane, which I shall forward to her, with a beautiful pair of slippers and fan; the former, I presume, for myself.

Miss Lane has been in New York since early in November, and I know not when she will return.

Presuming that the slippers are a New Year's gift from Miss King to myself, I desire to express my grateful thanks to her for this token of her regard. Present to her my kindest wishes for her health, prosperity, and happiness.

I wish I had something to write to you about which might interest you;

but my life glides on so smoothly that I should scarcely know how time passes, were it not for the terrible condition of the country. I never expected to see the day when the Federal Government would assume the power of issuing a paper currency, much less of making it a legal tender.

With my kindest regards to Mrs. and Miss King, I remain

Always your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

P. S.—Your letter of the 18th November is the last I have heard from any member of my late cabinet. I have kind friends at Washington, however, who occasionally give me the news. I was glad to see that Judge Black had been appointed reporter to the Supreme Court. The position is respectable, though a descent. . . . .

[MR. BUCHANAN TO THE HON. RICHARD COBDEN.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, PENN.,     )  
December 14, 1861.     )

MY DEAR SIR:—

I ought long since to have answered your letter of September; but a protracted illness, from which, thank God! I have some time since recovered, has left me far behind with my correspondence. It is my sincere desire always to cherish the intimacy which commenced between us in better and happier days. I deeply regret that the feelings of friendship between the people of the two countries are not what they were when we parted at Washington more than two years ago. The public journals on both sides of the water have contributed much to produce this result. Still the masses on our side are far from being hostile to the English people, whilst they entertain a very high regard for Queen Victoria.

I trust that the seizure of Messrs. Mason and Slidell on board the Trent may be viewed in what I consider its proper light by the British ministry. A neutral nation is the common friend of both belligerents, and has no right to aid the one to the injury of the other. It is, consequently, very clear, under the law of nations, that a neutral vessel has no right to carry articles contraband of war to any enemy, to transport his troops or his despatches. These principles are well settled by British authority. And Sir W. Scott, in the case of the *Atalanta* (Wheaton, 566) informs us that the writers on public law declare "that the belligerent may stop the ambassador of his enemy on his way." And why not? If it be unlawful to carry despatches, with the greater reason it must be unlawful to carry ministers who write despatches, and to whom despatches are addressed, who are the agents of one belligerent government on their way to a neutral country for the express purpose of enlisting its government in the war against the other.

In some respects it would have been better had Captain Wilkes seized the Trent and brought her into port. It would then have become a purely judicial

question, to be decided upon precedent and authority by the appropriate court of admiralty, and the two governments would not then have been brought face to face as they are now confronting each other. Under all the circumstances, I do not think that this seizure presents a justifiable cause of quarrel on the part of the British government, and I trust you may take this view of the subject.

In reference to your question in regard to blockade, no administration within the last half century, up to the end of my term, would have consented to a general declaration abolishing privateering. Our most effectual means of annoying a great naval power upon the ocean is by granting letters of marque and reprisal. We could not possibly, therefore, have consented to the Paris declaration which would have left the vessels (for example of Great Britain or France) free to capture our merchant vessels, whilst we should have deprived ourselves of the employment of the force which had proved so powerful in capturing their merchant vessels. Hence the proposition of Mr. Marcy to abolish war upon private property altogether on the ocean, as modern civilization had abolished it on the land. I do not think that a proposition was ever made to abolish blockade. I certainly have no recollection of it.

I am rejoiced to learn that Mr. Bright is well; I was afraid, when I left England, that his health was in an unpromising condition. Please to remember me in the kindest terms to him and Mr. Gibson. Miss Lane is in New York; if she were at home, she would have many kind messages to send you.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MISS LANE.]

WHEATLAND, December 19th, 1861.

MY DEAR HARRIET:—

I have received your favor of the 18th instant, and am truly sorry to learn the death of my friend Mr. Lanahan. At one period I was very much attached to him, and I still continue to entertain for him cordial feelings of kindness. . . . .

You ask my opinion on the Slidell and Mason affair, and whether there is danger of a war with England. I think, as a fair deduction from British authorities, that Captain Wilkes might have seized the Trent and brought her into port for adjudication. Had he done this, it would have become a judicial question, and the two nations would not have been brought front to front in opposition to each other. That he only seized the commissioners and let the vessel go was an act intended for kindness on his part. Certainly, a war can not grow out of this question, unless Great Britain desires it, without very bad management on our side. My kindest regards to the Judge and Mrs. Roosevelt.

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. LEIPER.]

WHEATLAND, December 21, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have just received your kind letter of the 19th instant, and, in answer, I think I may say that my health is restored. The swelling in my legs and feet has disappeared, and I now walk to Lancaster with great enjoyment.

You advise me to keep quiet, which I shall do for the present. I shall bide my time, under a perfect conviction that my administration cannot only be satisfactorily defended, but triumphantly vindicated.

I wish with all my heart that I could be with you at the meeting of your children and grandchildren on Christmas; but this is out of the question. The happy faces and innocent gambols of children have always had a charm for me. May you live many days in health and prosperity to enjoy such meetings around the family altar. As I cannot be present at the hospitable board, I hope you will drink my health in a glass of the old Custom House Madeira.

I am, like you, a passenger in the omnibus; and, although nothing could tempt me again to become a driver, yet I cannot avoid feeling deep anxiety for my country. I trust the danger of a war with England has passed away; but, if such a disastrous event should occur, it will be a war created by the newspapers. With my kindest regards to Mrs. Leiper and all your patriarchal family, I remain,

Very respectfully, your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

P. S.—Your sweetheart, Miss Lane, has been absent several weeks in New York, and I do not expect her home until after the New Year. I sincerely wish she felt more of a disposition than she does to bind herself in the silken cords which you describe.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MISS LANE.]

WHEATLAND, December 25th, 1861.

MY DEAR HARRIET:—

I have received your favor of yesterday and am happy to inform you that Doctor Blake has contradicted the picture and Japanese falsehood in the *National Intelligencer* of yesterday. You have probably ere this seen it.

I have passed a very sober, quiet and contented Christmas. I went to hear Mr. Krotel in the morning and came immediately home. It is the first day for many a day that I have had no visitors. Miss Hetty and myself dined together very pleasantly.

Poor Prince Albert! I think in many respects he was to be pitied. His position was very awkward, but he sustained it with becoming dignity. He could not assume the position of William the Third and say, if I am not to be king and am to be placed in a subordinate position to the queen, I shall return to Holland.

I intend to give Harry Magraw a dinner on Saturday next, but I can not rival the dinner which he gave when last at home. No such dinner has ever been given in Lancaster, at least to my knowledge.

I have not received a line from Judge Black nor seen him since he called here after meeting you in Philadelphia. I am glad he has been appointed reporter to the Supreme Court.

I enclose you an invitation from Mr. and Mrs. Wharton. I have answered my own, and informed them that I would send yours to you in New York. You will judge whether you ought to answer.

I wish you to remain in New York just as long as this may be agreeable to yourself and to Mr. and Mrs. Roosevelt. You would have a dull time here at this season.

Please to remember me in the kindest terms to the Judge and Mrs. Roosevelt, with my ardent wishes that they may pass many years together in peace, prosperity and happiness.

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO DR. BLAKE.]

WHEATLAND, December 30, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favor of the 27th instant, and thank you most kindly for your efficient agency in correcting the slander of the correspondent of the New York ———. Lord Lyons' letter is quite satisfactory.

Thank Heaven there is now no danger of an immediate war with England. That Mason and Slidell would be surrendered to John Bull I had expected for some time, from the editorials and correspondence of the New York *Herald*, which is evidently in the confidence of the administration or some members of it.

I know nothing of what is going on in Washington, except from the papers. From them I perceive that Judge Black has been appointed Reporter of the Supreme Court, and that General Cameron has conferred upon Mr. Holt the appointment of Auditor of General Fremont's accounts. I believe that Stanton and Horatio King have not yet been provided for.

I have not seen an account of your marriage; but this, I expect, will come along some day. How happy I should be to see you here. I now soon expect Miss Lane.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

1862—1864.

### PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE.

THE residue of my task can be easily and best performed by tracing in his correspondence the course of Mr. Buchanan's remaining years. As the letters quoted in the last chapter disclose, his tranquillity was disturbed only by his anxiety for the country, and by the attacks which were made upon his reputation. He lived through the whole of the war, through the first administration of Lincoln, the nomination of McClellan as the Democratic candidate for the Presidency, the second election of Lincoln, his assassination and the accession of President Johnson. The new and critical public questions that arose, the events that marked the wavering fortunes of the country, found him the same in feeling and opinion about the necessity for a complete suppression of all the military array of the Confederate States, and the restoration of the authority of the Federal Constitution. It would have been quite natural, if the mode in which he was treated had caused him to shut himself up in a stolid indifference to the success of the Federal arms. But his nature was too noble, his patriotism was too genuine, to allow the insults and injuries that were heaped upon him to affect his love for that Union in whose service forty years of his life had been passed. It is needless for me to enlarge upon the character of his patriotism; for it is attested by every sentiment and feeling that he was expressing from day to day in his most familiar and unpremeditated correspondence with his friends. But it is an important part of my duty to describe with accuracy the steps that he meditated and that he finally took, for the vindication of the course of his administration during the last five months of his term.



It has already been seen that soon after his retirement to Wheatland, he began to collect and arrange the materials for a defence; and that he was dissuaded from immediate publication by the friends who believed that he could not get the public ear. He withheld the publication of the book until the war was virtually over; and, in fact, he did not cause it to be published until some time after the Presidential election of 1864, for it was no part of his object to promote by it the immediate success of the Democratic party. What he meant to do was to leave behind him an exact and truthful account of his administration "on the eve of the rebellion." The extent to which it obtained the public attention may be judged by the fact that five thousand copies of it were sold, mostly in the course of two years after its first publication, which was in the year 1866.\* The sale was not as large as might have been expected, partly in consequence of the temper of the times, and partly because it was written in the third person, which made it a little less lively narrative than it might have been. But although his name was not put on the title page, the preface disclosed plainly that he was the author. It was entirely his own work. The style is clear and strong, and its accuracy has not been—indeed, it could not well be—seriously questioned. Its statements were chiefly founded on the public documents of the time to which they related, and the information furnished to him by the gentlemen of his cabinet who could assist his recollection. He did not make a direct use, by quotation, of those ample stores of proof which he held among his private papers, and which he left for the future use of his biographer.

It will be seen from the letters which I am about to quote, that after the publication of this book, he intended to have prepared, under his own direction, a full biography, in justice, he said, to himself and the great men whom he had known and with whom he had acted. He continued through the remainder of his life to collect materials for this purpose. Various arrangements were made from time to time for carrying out this object,

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\* The preface bears date in September, 1865; and the publishers entered it for copyright in that year. But the imprint of the copy which I have used bears date in the year 1866. Mr. Buchanan made no arrangement with the publishers for any pecuniary profits on this book, and never received any.

but none of them took effect, partly because of his increasing bodily infirmities, and partly because he could not have exactly the assistance that he needed. His intellectual faculties continued, as his correspondence abundantly shows, to be unimpaired to the last; and such was the tenacity of his memory, his vast experience, his fund of amusing as well important anecdotes, and his thorough acquaintance with the politics of the time through which he had lived, that an historical work from his pen, or one written under his immediate direction, would have been of inestimable value. As it was, he collected a very great mass of materials for the elucidation of his own history and of the history of the country from 1820 to 1860. But these materials remained in an undigested state down to the time of his death; and when he executed his last will, he inserted in it a provision for the preparation of a biography, which did not take effect as he had designed, for a reason to which I have referred in the preface of the present work. He had acted history, had lived history, and he was eminently qualified to write history.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MISS LANE.]

WHEATLAND, January 3d, 1862.

MY DEAR HARRIET:—

I have received your favor of the 31st ultimo, directed to me as the Hon. James Buchanan, and not ex-President Buchanan, which I was glad to observe. In compliance with its request, I enclose you a check. . . .

There are things in Mr. Seward's letter to Lord Lyons which will furnish the British Government with a pretext to take offence, if they so desire. When we determined to swallow the bitter pill,\* which I think was right, we ought to have done it gracefully and without pettifoggery.

No notice seems to have been taken of the publication of Mr. Seward's letter to Mr. Adams, of the 30th November. It may have been well to write this letter, but to publish it under the authority of the Government was unwise. It states: "I have never for a moment believed that such a recognition [of the Confederate States] could take place without producing immediately a war between the United States and all the recognizing powers. I have not supposed it possible that the British government could fail to see this," etc., etc. This will be treated as an impotent threat, by that malignant anti-American journal, the *Times*, and possibly by a portion of the British people.

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\* The surrender of Mason and Slidell.

You may tell Judge Roosevelt that I have been no little astonished to find in the excellent *Journal of Commerce* articles to prove that the Federal Government possesses, under the Constitution, the power to issue a paper currency and to make it a legal tender; and this upon the principle that it has not been expressly prohibited. They seem to have lost sight of the great principle that Congress has no power except what is expressly granted or necessarily implied.\* Mr. Webster did once darkly intimate on the floor of the Senate that Congress might authorize the issue of a paper currency, and whilst it was opposed by the entire Democratic party, it met no favor with the Whig party. Mr. Clay's most strongly urged argument against the Independent Treasury was, that it might lead to a Government paper currency. I do not recollect that in my day it was ever claimed, even by the most violent consolidationist, that a creditor could be forced to take either the paper of the Bank of the United States or the Government, in payment of a debt. If the Judge has it convenient, I wish he would look at my speech in favor of the Independent Treasury, delivered in the Senate on 29th September, 1837. . . . .

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO JUDGE WOODWARD.]

WHEATLAND, September 5th, 1863.

DEAR SIR:—

Until I received your note this morning, the fact that I had written to you in July last had not for weeks recurred to my memory. I expected no answer. I probably ought not to have written at all on the subject of the Conscription Law. Had I reflected for a moment that you were a Judge of the Supreme Court, as well as the Democratic candidate for Governor, I should have refrained. My abhorrence throughout life has been the mixing up of party politics with the administration of justice. I perceived that in New York the party were fast making the unconstitutionality of the Conscription Law the leading and prominent point in the canvass, and I wrote (I believe with good effect) to an able and influential friend, guarding him against it, and referring to Mr. Monroe's opinion. At the same time it occurred to me that a word of caution to you confidentially, *as a candidate, not as a Judge*, might not be inappropriate.

I consider that on the result of your election vaster issues depend, both for weal and for woe to our country, than on that of any other gubernatorial canvass ever held in Pennsylvania. I am, therefore, anxious for your success, and believe it will be accomplished. My information, though not as extensive

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\* Mr. Buchanan must have referred to communications, not to editorial opinions. The editorial views of the *Journal of Commerce* have always been opposed to the views which he controverted.

as in former times, proceeds from honest and sound judging Democrats. It is given voluntarily, and is generally, though not universally, cheering.

I beg you not to answer this note.

Very respectfully yours,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO JAMES BUCHANAN HENRY.]

WHEATLAND, January 7, 1863.

MY DEAR JAMES:—

I have received your favor of the 5th instant, and am much indebted to you for Mr. Adams' oration. I send you the price.

Mr. Croswell has not written to me. It is now out of time for the publication of an article in reply to Weed's letter and the election story. I do not believe that Mr. C. intends to publish such an article; and I desire that nothing further should be said to him on the subject. Let him do as he pleases.

I feel very solicitous about the course of Governor Seymour and the New York Democracy. He will be surrounded by men of principle in proportion to their interest. I know them well. I trust that they may not produce a reaction. I have much confidence in Governor Seymour himself, and regret that he has been obliged to "back out" in regard to the Police Commissioners.

I owe you many thanks for your kind letter of the 24th ultimo. I have been calm and tranquil under the abuse I have received, and would be positively happy were it not for the troubles of the country. I am much indebted to General Scott for his attack. My vindication against his charges has been of great service to me throughout the country south and west of New York. Of this I have daily evidence. My statements have not, to my knowledge, been attacked even by the Republican papers. I have no confidence in the ———, knowing by whom it is controlled. But all things will, at last, come right.

Harriet Buchanan is still here, but will return home to-morrow.

"The two Pollies" and Miss Hetty send you their kindest regards.

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. LEIPER.]

WHEATLAND, January 11, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received yours of the 9th instant, and can assure you I do not entertain the least idea of making any publication at present, but shall remain where you have placed me, on the rock of St. Helena. I am content to bide

my time, and not even give to the world the official documents which I have collected and arranged, although they would place me above reproach.

I think, under all the circumstances, the administration acted wisely in surrendering Mason and Slidell. I say nothing of the accompanying despatch of Seward or of the publication of his letter to Mr. Adams.

Miss Lane has not yet returned from New York, and I know not when to expect her.

From your friend always,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. KING.]

WHEATLAND, January 28, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favor of the 23d instant, and had heard from Miss Lane on the subject of the slippers. She has not yet returned from New York. I desire to repeat my warm thanks to Miss King for her valued token of regard.

I have just read the rhapsody of ——— over the appointment of Mr. Stanton. . . . .

I do most earnestly hope that our army may be able to do something effective before the 1st of April. If not, there is great danger, not merely of British, but of European interference. There will then be such a clamor for cotton among the millions of operatives dependent upon it for bread, both in England and on the continent, that I fear for the blockade.

From my heart I wish Stanton success, not only for his own sake, but that of the country. He is a great improvement on his immediate predecessor. I believe him to be a truly honest man, who will never sanction corruption, though he may not be quite able to grapple with treason as the lion grapples with his prey. I would rather he had not retained the assistant of the late Secretary and appointed another of the same; but they are both keen and energetic.

With my kindest regards to Mrs. King and Annie Augusta, I remain, very respectfully,

Your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. JOHN A. PARKER.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, February 3, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favor of the 28th ultimo, and was grateful to learn that you had arrived safely in New York. I am sorry to believe that a letter from me would do you no good at Washington. Nevertheless, it is proper I should state that when South Carolina, in 1850 or 1851, invited Virginia to coöperate with her in the adoption of secession measures, you were active and efficient in procuring the passage of resolutions by the General Assembly of

your State, refusing to comply with the invitation. I know that you went to Richmond for this purpose, on the advice of the late Colonel King and myself, and I learned at the time, from reliable sources, that you contributed much in producing this happy result. I do not recollect the precise terms of the resolutions either of South Carolina or Virginia.

Would that Virginia had persisted in this wise and patriotic course! Had she done so, she might have become the happy instrument of bringing back the cotton States and restoring the Union. Her rash conduct in rushing out of the Union after these States had, by assaulting and capturing Fort Sumter, commenced the civil war, has done herself irreparable injury, as well as inflicted a great calamity upon the whole country.

What have been your opinions concerning secession after 1851, and until you left the United States, I cannot state, though I have no reason to doubt their loyalty. You certainly never expressed any different sentiment to me in all our intercourse. I need not say that I am wholly ignorant of your present opinions or purposes on this subject.

I need not assure you that it would afford me sincere satisfaction to serve you. In case of need, I would advise you to appeal to Mr. Lincoln himself. He is, I believe, an honest and patriotic man, with a heart in the right place. The bad health of Mrs. Parker will be a prevailing argument with him in favor of permitting you to return to your family, after more than a year's absence in the public service, unless powerful reasons should exist against such a permission.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO DR. BLAKE.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, February 10, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favor of the 5th instant. Glad as I would have been to see Mr. Carlisle and yourself during the last week, I was almost satisfied you did not come. The weather was very unfavorable, and besides *mirabile dictu!* I had a sharp onset from the gout. Your visit, I hope, will not be long delayed. The birds already begin to sing at early morn, and the willows are assuming the livery of spring.

And, so, Mr. Pearce thinks it is a matter of no importance that I should go down to history as having put my hand into the Treasury and drawn out \$8000 more than was appropriated, to gratify my personal vanity in furnishing the White House. Thus the fact stands recorded in the proceedings of Congress, and in the debate in the House it is made, by Mr. Stevens, a precedent for allowing Mr. Lincoln to draw from the Treasury \$11,000 more than was appropriated. This is the staple of Mr. Stevens's argument, the Representative from my own district. And does Mr. Pearce suppose, in opposition to these uncontradicted statements before the Senate and the House, that any man will ever pore over the appropriation bills to correct the error? Alas for craven fear!

Although I shall never again become an active politician I intend to take care of Mr. Bright, should there be any necessity for it, as I think there never will be. His day in Indiana was passed before his last election to the Senate, if election it could be fairly called. He can no longer block the way against the elevation of such able, eloquent, and rising men as Mr. Voorhees.

In any other state of public affairs than the present, the gentlemen of the cabinet referred to by Thurlow Weed would have immediately contradicted his charge. Had it even been true, then their honor would have required this. Since the origin of the Government there has been no case of violating cabinet confidence except one, and the great man who was betrayed into it by violent prejudice was destroyed. It is moral perjury, and no cabinet could exist if the consultations were not held sacred. The charge of Thurlow Weed is, therefore, in effect, that some one member of the cabinet has disclosed to him a cabinet secret, and authorized him to publish it to the world. General Dix, now at the head of the police in Baltimore, though worthy of a better place, is one of the *dramatis personae*, though he was not in the cabinet until a considerable time after Floyd had resigned. The very day after the explosion in regard to Indian bonds, I informed Mr. Floyd, through his relative, Mr. Breckinridge, that I would expect him to resign. He did so, and informed me that Floyd appeared to be very much struck with the information. Up until that time Floyd had been uniformly opposed to the secession party. The escape of Major Anderson, two or three days thereafter, from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter at midnight, first spiking his cannon and burning his gun carriages, afforded Floyd an opportunity, as he supposed, to expire in a blaze of glory.

I am at a loss to know what to do in this matter. I know the enemy wish to draw my fire in a straggling manner. I wish it, at once, to embrace and refute the whole line of charges, and I know that when the entire truth is told my enemies will be confounded, and by the blessing of God I shall be safe at every point. I shall decide nothing for two or three days. I may hear from some member of the cabinet implicated. It would be strange if General Dix should patiently submit to the charge, though not a member of the cabinet at all at the time. You may read this letter to our friend Carlisle, and converse with him on the subjects, of course, confidentially.

Miss Lane desires to be very kindly remembered to you.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

P. S.—I forget to observe that the escape of Major Anderson from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter took place on Christmas night, 1860, but Weed has it in February, 1861. Floyd left the cabinet in December.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. KING.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, February 10th, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favor of the 6th, and am rejoiced that Annie Augusta is about to be married, with your approbation. I need not say how heartily I wish that she may be happy. . . .

That Stanton is an able and an honest man there can be no doubt. I wish him success with all my heart and soul, and he promises very fairly. . . .

Apropos—you speak of Bright's expulsion from the Senate. I will copy a letter which I have just written to Senator Saulsbury, who sent me his speech upon the subject.

“(Private.)

“MY DEAR SIR:—

“Many thanks for your able speech on the expulsion of Mr. Bright. I have read it with much interest. The question was purely judicial, and ought to have been so considered. Still, even in this point of view, there was room for honest differences of opinion. Whilst I had reason to believe at the time that Mr. Bright sympathized with the ultras of the cotton States in condemning my absolute refusal, in December, 1860, on the demand of the self-styled commissioners from South Carolina, to withdraw the troops from South Carolina, yet I had no idea, until I read his letter and late speech, that he remained in the same state of feeling after the inauguration of the hostile Confederacy.

“I had always entertained the warmest friendship for Mr. Bright, and manifested this on every proper occasion whilst I was President, and therefore felt deep sorrow when I saw the letter to the President of that Confederacy, recommending a gentleman whose business it was to dispose of a great improvement in fire-arms; and this it now appears, was so much a matter of course with him, that he has forgotten he had ever written such a letter.”

I thank you for the extract from the *Star* containing an account of Mrs. Lincoln's party. I am glad there was no dancing. I had refused this, even on the carpet, to the earnest request of the Prince of Wales. The reasons are obvious why balls should not be given in the White House.

Your conversation with Stevenson was strange. If there be any member of Jeff Davis's cabinet in favor of reconstruction, Hunter must be the man.

I trust that our late victories may be the prelude to those more decided, and that ere the spring opens we may be in such a condition as to afford no pretext to England and France to interfere in our domestic affairs.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.



[MR. BUCHANAN TO MRS. BOYD.]

(Private.)

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, February 17, 1862.

MY DEAR MADAM :—

I was happy to receive your note of the 10th instant. It reminded me of earlier and happier times, which I trust may speedily return. If I could be instrumental in restoring peace to the land in the manner you suggest, or in any other manner, this would fill my heart with joy. But I see not what can now be done by any man in the North. The Confederate States commenced this unhappy war for the destruction of the Union, and until they shall be willing to consent to its restoration, there can be no hope for peace. We should hail their return under the Constitution with delight. But the idea of a recognition of their independence, and a consequent dissolution of the Confederacy which has rendered us prosperous and happy in peace and triumphant and glorious in war, cannot be entertained for a moment. This would be the death knell of their own safety and welfare, and would destroy the prestige and character of our country throughout the world.

With every wish for your happiness, I remain, very respectfully,

Your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. STANTON.]

(Private.)

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, February 25, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR :—

I have thought it a duty of friendship to inform you that the two letters which you describe in yours to me of the 16th May last, to wit: that of "the 24th of April, the day after the Baltimore riot," and that written "on the Blue Tuesday, the day before the arrival of the New York regiments," never reached me. I hope they may not be in improper hands.

I deem it my right to ask for a copy of the orders issued by the Secretary of War to the commander of the Brooklyn about the last of January or beginning of February, 1861, by which the safety of Fort Pickens was secured, together with the telegraphic despatch which preceded them, addressed to Messrs. Hunter, Slidell and Bigler (I believe), of the Senate. Your particular attention must have been drawn to this subject a few days after the 4th of March, 1861, because in your letter to me of the 14th of that month you state your recollection to be, that Mr. Holt and General Scott concurred with me in that arrangement, which you say, "when proposed in cabinet was approved by Judge Black and myself."

Although you now belong to an administration which has manifested intense hostility to myself, and whose organ, at least in this State, is the *Philadelphia Press*, yet, notwithstanding our changed relations, I wish you all the success and glory in your efforts to conquer the rebellion and restore the Union, which your heart can desire. If I might be permitted to intimate a

word of advice, it would be to write as little as possible for the public eye. Let your actions speak for themselves, and so far as I can judge, they have spoken loudly in your favor.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO DR. BLAKE.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, February 26th, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favor of the 21st instant, and owe you many thanks for your prompt and successful attention to my requests. You do all things well. It is strange that Mr. Fessenden should have doubted as to the propriety and necessity of correcting his assertion that I had expended \$8000 more in furnishing the White House than had been appropriated by Congress for this purpose.

I am very happy to learn that you intend to pay us a visit, and this "before a great while;" and you were entirely correct in informing our friend Carlisle that he would, also, receive a cordial welcome. The sooner the better; but the country now presents its most gloomy aspect. It is covered by snow, and this is not sufficient to enable us to sleigh. In a day or two, I hope, the snow will disappear. Please drop a line to me two or three days before your departure from Washington, so that I may certainly be at home on your arrival and send for you to Lancaster. . . .

Your interview with Stanton was entirely satisfactory. Whenever I choose to dissipate all the slanders against my administration, this can be done effectually. It is strange, passing strange, that the barefaced falsehood of the stealing of arms by Floyd (who is certainly no better than he ought to be), which was nailed to the counter more than a year ago by the Report of the Committee on Military Affairs from Mr. Stanton, should have been repeated again and again, until it is now almost universally believed. I observe in Colonel Maynadier's letter, published in the *National Intelligencer*, a statement of what is the truth in regard to Floyd. He was persistently and openly opposed to secession and the seceders, and was not on terms with their leaders until the exposure of his connection with the abstracted bonds. Informed at that time it was expected he should resign, he retired with a flourish, under the assumed cover of being a violent secessionist and therefore unwilling to remain longer in the cabinet.

Bright has got what he deserved, though the precedent may be and doubtless is dangerous. He was thoroughly in league with Davis, or at least in their hostility to myself. His attack upon me in his speech was without any foundation, and was doubtless intended to enlist Republican votes.

Miss Lane desires me to renew to you "the assurance of her distinguished consideration."

Ever your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

P. S.—Maynadier, in his letter dated February 3d, 1862, to the Potter Committee, says: "He (Floyd) had recently published over his own signature [this was probably about November, 1860], in a Richmond paper, a letter on this subject [secession] which gained him high credit at the North for his boldness in rebuking the pernicious views of many in his own State." I do not wish you to hunt for this letter. Its worth would not be equal to the trouble. It was, I believe, published in the *Richmond Examiner*, though possibly the *Enquirer*. It would now be a great curiosity. Nobody, I presume, in Washington, files these papers.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO JUDGE BLACK.]

WHEATLAND, March 4, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favor of the 1st instant, but, I regret, without the opinion. I am happy to say you are entirely mistaken in supposing that I suffer from low spirits. I am astonished at my own health and spirits, and the zest with which I enjoy the calm pleasures with which Providence has blessed me. It is true that I regret I had not called the attention of the public nearly a year ago to certain historical facts furnished by official documents, which would have relieved me from imputations affecting my character and, in some degree, that of my party; but I excuse myself by the consideration that I was too unwell to suffer my mind to play with a healthy and vigorous action. I am not at all astonished to learn that *your "views and mine are so far out of accord,"* and that in my administration I first conceded too much to the South, and afterwards too much to the present administration. My policy was well matured, at least by myself, and was clearly and distinctly presented in the messages of December, 1860, and January 8th, 1861. From these I never consciously swerved. The first was approved by every member of the cabinet except Thompson and Cobb, and to the last I believe there was no objection. After a full and careful review, I would not, if I could, alter this policy in any particular. I should have been glad could you have taken time to run your eyes over the paper delivered to you by Mr. Glossbrenner, and to have informed me of any mistakes which, in your judgment, I may have made in regard to facts. Our opinions may be at variance, but I should be truly sorry to present ourselves in opposition to each other in regard to matters of fact.

As to my course since the wicked bombardment of Fort Sumter, it is but a regular consequence of my whole policy towards the seceding States. They had been informed over and over again by me what would be the consequences of an attack upon it. They chose to commence civil war, and Mr. Lincoln had no alternative but to defend the country against dismemberment. I certainly should have done the same thing had they begun the war in my time; and this they well knew. I am not conscious that the bad conduct of the South toward me, sustained, I believe, by Bright alone of the Northern

Senators, has prejudiced my judgment against them. He has got his reward, though perhaps not in a very legitimate manner.

I hope you may be able to find the paper, the last sheets of which were handed to you by Mr. Stanton. It would be a great loss to me.

On your postscript in relation to General Cass I shall not remark, further than to say it is not in accordance with my recollection.

Notwithstanding our misunderstandings, I hope we may ever continue to be friends. Towards you my heart is in the right place. If I should publish against your advice, it will be because throughout my life I have refuted slander on the spot, when worthy of refutation, without regard to consequences. I think I owe this to the Democracy of Pennsylvania, which is now exhibiting unmistakable symptoms of a new and vigorous life, and indications of a continued attachment to myself.

I presume I need scarcely invite you to pay me a visit. This I promise, however, that if you will come and bring Mrs. Black along, I shall not introduce any subject which will give you pain, or on which we can possibly differ.

From your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO HON. ISAAC TOUCEY.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, March 19, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I cannot deny myself the pleasure of expressing the great satisfaction I have felt in perusing your testimony before Hale's committee. I never saw it until a few minutes ago. I knew well how unjust the charges were against you, and anticipated your triumphant vindication whenever you should be called upon to make it, and, therefore, it is not more conclusive than I had expected.

Forney set the report afloat that I was engaged in writing a history of my administration, life, and times. There is no truth in this; but it is true that I have collected and arranged the necessary documents, which might be put in form at any moment, to justify all my proceedings in regard to the South, since the election of Mr. Lincoln. Your testimony alone was wanting to make them perfect. I wish very much I could see you. I could scarcely ask you to pay me a visit, unless you should take this on your way, should you have occasion to visit Washington. I need not say how cordial would be our welcome to Mrs. Toucey and yourself.

How strange have been the fortunes of your colleagues Holt, Dix, and Stanton! I was somewhat mortified when Holt accepted an auditorship under Cameron to investigate Fremont's accounts. I have a warm regard for General Dix, and think he deserves a better place than the head of the Baltimore police, where he can acquire no glory. I wish he were in the field at the head of a proper command.

My health is excellent, considering my age and late severe illness. I am

contented, and should enjoy myself very much but for the troubles of the country; still my spirits are cheerful. After a careful review of all that I have done, or omitted to do, since the unfortunate 6th of November, 1860, I can lay my hand on my heart, and say that I have nothing to repent of. Our constant agreement in all important measures is a solace and comfort, and endears you to me in a peculiar manner. May you and yours be ever prosperous and happy.

With my warm and respectful regards to Mrs. Toucey, as well as those of Miss Lane, I remain,

Your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO DR. BLAKE.]

WHEATLAND, April 2, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your kind letter of the 31st ultimo. I had duly received yours of the 20th, and ought to have answered it, but truly had nothing to say. Besides, I excuse myself by the agreeable anticipation that I expect soon to enjoy the pleasure of seeing you.

I am glad you brought the attention of Judge Black to Weed's letter. I have heard from him since, and expect every day to see him. . . . . A statement was made by an official of Government in a foreign newspaper, that they [members of my cabinet] had one after the other offered me the grossest insult. Had such a scene transpired in my cabinet, they should not have been in office fifteen minutes. I do not distrust the friendship of Judge Black. On the contrary, I have no doubt of his devoted attachment, but I presume he is unwilling to stand alone in the contradiction of the slander. General Dix might, perhaps, join him; but let it pass, my time will come.

I am decidedly in favor of prosecuting the war with vigor to a successful termination; but still I consider it bad policy unnecessarily to exasperate the Southern people. The insult offered to the memory of Mr. Calhoun, by changing the name of Fort Calhoun to Fort Wool, will sink deep into the hearts of the people of the cotton States—men, women, and children. It was my fortune to differ from this great and pure man on many important questions, but his character was so elevated that Clay and Webster and others pronounced eulogies upon him in the Senate and in the House after his decease. He died ten years before the commencement of the troubles, and even before the compromise of 1850. I do not think the administration will derive much honor from having attainted his memory. But "*de gustibus non est disputandum.*" Had he been living, I do not think we should be involved in our present difficulties.

We live in the hope of soon seeing you. This is a charming spring day, and the country begins to assume the livery of early spring,

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO DR. BLAKE.]

(Private.)

WHEATLAND, May 17, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I take the chance that this acknowledgment of the receipt of your acceptable letter of the 15th may reach you before you leave for New York. I wish you would pass this way either going to or returning from that city; but this would be too much to ask. This country is now clothed with rich and beautiful verdure. The next time you come, and I trust this may be before long, pray bring your trunk with you.

I have neither seen Judge Black nor heard from him since you left us. I hope none of my friends will trouble him again about the Thurlow Weed letter.

In all free countries, fidelity to the head of the government on the part of the members of his cabinet, whilst belonging to his political family, has ever been considered both a point of honor and duty, and has rarely, if ever, been violated. Whilst at liberty to contract new political engagements, if they should betray to their new friends or the public what had transpired in the old cabinet, without the consent of its head, they would be held justly infamous. If, therefore, the statement made by Weed were as true as it is infamously false, the irresistible implication would be that he had received the information from a member of the cabinet, and thus all of those implicated would be exposed to the charge until it was brought home to the guilty individual.

Thurlow Weed is understood to be an agent of the Government. To serve them he abandoned his position as head of the lobby in the New York legislature and went to Europe. Whilst in London, he publishes a letter in a London journal and attaches his own name to it, stating that Messrs. Stanton, Holt, Dix and Black had grossly insulted me in cabinet council, and had used expressions to me which, if true, would have caused their instant removal. Is this falsehood, proceeding from a *quasi* official source, contradicted by any of them? . . . . . Notwithstanding all, I except Judge Black. I believe his heart is in the right place. . . . .

Miss Lane intends to leave here for New York on Thursday next, and will be at James Henry's. She would be much gratified to meet you there.

I fear the carriage is a bad speculation.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[TO MR. LEIPER.]

WHEATLAND, May 27, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favor of the 22d, and am always rejoiced to learn that you are healthy and happy. Neither of us can say:—

“That in our youth we never did apply  
Hot and rebellious liquors to our blood,”

though, with the blessing of Providence, we both enjoy "a green old age." If we have not been abstemious, we have been temperate, and used the blessings in our way without abusing them.

Miss Lane is now absent. She left here on Thursday last on a visit to her uncle at Oxford Church, and her cousin, James B. Henry, on Staten Island. You always live in her kind memory.

I feel more and more deeply every day for the sad condition of our country. May the Almighty Governor of the world pardon the national sins and corruptions of this people, and restore the Constitution and the Union, and perpetuate our civil and religious liberties! Without His interposition, I can see no determinate end to our troubles.

My health is as good as usual. Ever your friend,

Very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MISS SEATON TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

WASHINGTON, June 23, 1862.

MY DEAR MR. BUCHANAN:—

My father, at my request, allows me to be his deputy in acknowledging, with many thanks, your kind and interesting letter relative to the graceful note and gift from the Prince of Wales. He desires me to say that he thinks it would be well to publish the Prince's letter, as the fact of your having received it has been made public; while the cordial and friendly sentiment expressed by the Prince for the American people, and for yourself as their chief, would undoubtedly be welcomed by the country. My father thinks that, so far from there being any impropriety in making the letter public, justice to the Prince seems rather to make it necessary; and he will be happy to make the *Intelligencer* the medium of communicating it, should you so desire. Pray let him know, or, rather, may I not say, let *me* be the recipient of your decision, for I have not yet had the pleasure of placing your autograph among my otherwise valuable collection, where it would hold, I need not say, a choice place, not only from the warm personal regard I entertain for you, dear Mr. Buchanan, but from the fact that I consider you the last constitutional President we shall ever see. At a moment when passion whirled the country to frenzy, you had the true courage to refrain—to abide within the limits marked out by the Constitution for the Executive. Were you still with us, I for one believe that we should not now be engaged in this fearful fratricidal strife. Let me not, however, enter upon this saddest of themes; how sad you, in your peaceful home, can hardly conceive; and you and Miss Lane may congratulate yourselves at not being made unhappy by the sight of a conflict which has uprooted society here, separated friends and families, severed the dearest ties. Your reign was a peaceful one; would that it were just beginning.

I am glad to assure you of the continued health of my parents, who are in

the possession of all that makes old age valuable—love, reverence, and troops of friends, among whom they have so long numbered you as one best appreciated. We rejoice to learn that you bear the honors of your years so well, and I trust that you may continue to possess the blessing of my father's activity and youthfulness of spirits, which are a marvel to us all, although his next birthday will ring out seventy-seven! I hope that Miss Lane is still as lovely and charming as I always thought her. Tell her that when —— sailed last week for England, I regretted that he was not accompanied by one whom I should be well pleased to see our representative just now at Balmoral.

I suppose we can hardly expect ever to see you here; yet I hope that we may meet again; but if not, your sweet message induces me to think that I shall be still kindly remembered. Pray let it be so. What a volume I am sending you; can you pardon me for such an infliction?

With warm regards to yourself from my parents, and my cordial remembrance to Miss Lane, believe me, dear Mr. Buchanan,

Always very sincerely yours,

JOSEPHINE SEATON.

The following is the letter of the Prince of Wales to Mr. Buchanan, referred to by Miss Seaton. It was written while the Prince was on his travels in the East. The full length portrait of himself, which accompanied it, painted by Sir John Watson Gordon, remained at Wheatland until Mr. Buchanan's death. It is now the property of Mr. Johnston.

[THE PRINCE OF WALES TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

JAFFA, March 29, 1862.

DEAR MR. BUCHANAN:—

Permit me to request that you will accept the accompanying portrait as a slight mark of my grateful recollection of the hospitable reception and agreeable visit at the White House on the occasion of my tour in the United States.

Believe me that the cordial welcome which was then vouchsafed to me by the American people, and by you as their chief, can never be effaced from my memory.

I venture to ask you, at the same time, to remember me kindly to Miss Lane, and believe me, dear Mr. Buchanan,

Yours very truly,

ALBERT EDWARD.



[MR. DERRICK TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

WASHINGTON, D. C., July 5, 1862.

DEAR SIR:—

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 2d inst., enclosing a check for \$100, as a contribution to the fund for the Pennsylvania Soldiers' Relief Association, and to express to you the thanks of the committee of that association, appointed to solicit contributions, for your very liberal and unsolicited donation. I am, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

A. H. DERRICK.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. WM. FLINN.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, July 12, 1862.

DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favor of the 10th instant, and you will please to accept my thanks for the two missing numbers of the *Globe* and the *Congressional Directory*. Be good enough, also, to present my acknowledgements to Mr. Shiel for the *Directory*, and say I appreciate it highly as a token of his regard. By the same mail I received a copy of the Blue Book under the frank of Mr. Hunter, and directed in the handwriting of good Mr. Faherty. I presume you caused this to be sent; but whether or not, you need give yourself no further trouble in this matter.

Miss Lane regrets very much that she was not at home during your visit, but hopes that it will not be long until you repeat it.

I am glad to learn that Miss Jones has made so good a match. I hope her father may be prosperous and happy. I have not heard from him nor of him since a few days after you left Wheatland.

I wish I had some news which might interest you. The suspense was dreadful whilst the fight was proceeding near Richmond, and I felt greatly relieved when I learned that General McClellan and our brave army had escaped destruction. His strategy was admirable, but I am at loss to know why he did not occupy his present position from the beginning. Mystery yet hangs over the whole affair, though I feel very confident that when all is unravelled McClellan will be justified.

With my kindest regards to Mrs. Flinn, I remain always

Truly your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO DR. BLAKE.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, July 12th, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have not answered your letter of the 1st instant, awaiting the answer of Stackpole and Pierre; but as they have not yet come to hand, I presume I

need not expect them. I shall be right glad to see them, though much obliged to you for your prudent caution.

I am glad to learn that Senator Wright talks of paying me a visit on his return to Indiana. You may say to him that if he should, he shall receive a cordial welcome. . . . .

We felt the deepest anxiety during the fight before Richmond, and I felt a heavy pressure removed from my heart when we learned that McClellan and his brave army were safe. Without doubt his change of position in the face of a superior army evinced great skill in strategy; but why was the wrong position originally selected? I still feel great confidence in McClellan, and with all my heart wish him success. Still, there is a mystery in the whole affair which time alone can unravel.

Please to remember me most kindly to Messrs. Carlisle and Riggs. How happy I should be to see both, or either of them. . . . .

Mr. Shunk was here a few days ago, who came from Judge Black's in company with our C. J. Lowry. The Judge had too bad a headache to leave home, and therefore sent his son-in-law.

Miss Lane desires to be most kindly remembered to you.

From your friend always,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[SIR HENRY HOLLAND TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

BROOK STREET, LONDON, July 18th, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Your letter, which I received through Lord Lyons, was very welcome to me, as an expression of your friendship and regard—even the more welcome, in this sense, from its coming amidst these troublous and ungenial times, when all old feelings and relations seem to be perverted or put aside. I scarcely know whether it is more pleasurable or painful to look back to those few happy days at Washington in October, 1860. Pray tell Miss Lane, with my affectionate regards, that I have not written to her lately, from a difficulty in writing at all to America during the present state of things. No letter could be written without referring to them, and no such reference could be made without pain; nor could any comment be possible, where every issue to this unhappy struggle is shrouded in such perfect darkness. I have letters now lying before me from Mr. Everett and Thurlow Weed (the latter dated as late as the 5th July, from New York), and I see from both how completely events have belied all calculation, and how little is seen, or can safely be conjectured, as to the future. Lord Lyons, too, has been breakfasting with me this morning, and we have been talking at length over all the recent and present events of the cabinet at Washington and the armies in the field. He professes the same inability to form a judgment as to the issues of the war. The universal opinion here is (and it has been mine from the very outset) that it must end in separation, in some form or other, and that the really important point now is, what shall be the border line. I have the conviction (which I expressed in a

former letter) that the course followed during the last few months of your Presidency was that best fitted to avert this misfortune, had it been possible to do so. All succeeding events, even down to these late terrible battles in front of Richmond, confirm me in this impression. It was well worth the effort made to win the South back, by gentle and generous means. The issue, thus far, shows how completely an opposite course of action has failed of effect. I will quit this subject, however, the rather so, as I have but a few more minutes in which to write, and the mail goes to-day.

The Prince of Wales has returned from his long journey in Egypt, Syria and Greece, in thorough health, and with great benefit in every way. He has been a great comfort to the Queen since his return. The Queen is in good health, but still deeply sorrowing over what is hardly less a grief to the country than to herself. She does her public work admirably, as usual, but wishes no public appearances this year. I received from her, three days ago, two beautiful and affecting volumes connected with the memory of the Prince Consort. Your letter came to my hands while I was writing to thank her for them.

We are all prosperous here, save the distress in the cloth manufacturing districts, from the want of the raw material. It seems likely that Parliament will have to make some provision against the probable increase of this distress, as the year goes on.

Last year I went to Constantinople, and Athens, and some parts of Asia Minor. This year I shall first pay some visits in the extreme north of Scotland (the Duke of Sutherland, Edward Ellis, etc.), and then go into Spain. Lady H. and my daughter go to Switzerland for a few weeks.

I must hasten to a close. Again let me ask you to keep me in Miss Lane's remembrance, and to believe me ever, my dear sir,

Yours very faithfully,

H. HOLLAND.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. LEIPER.]

WHEATLAND, July 25, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favors of the 10th and 23d instants. Miss Lane is greatly indebted to you for your photograph, which has been placed in her book.

How long I ought in silence to bear ——'s slanders is now a serious question. I have not seen his late speech at Harrisburg, but understand from a friend that it charges me with being in constant correspondence with foreign governments, urging the recognition of the Confederacy. This is in substance a charge of treason, without the shadow of a pretext, and ought to be punished by an appeal to our courts of justice. Miss Lane desires to be kindly remembered to you.

Your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO DR. BLAKE.]

WHEATLAND, August 6, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I write to thank you for your letter of the 24th ultimo, and for Mr. O'Sullivan's letters. He is an able and clear headed man. I have read them according to your request.

—— is one of those inflictions which give me but little trouble. His malignity without a cause almost amounts to insanity. He cannot avoid abusing me. In this manner base minds relieve themselves from the weight of obligations to their benefactors. I have never read his speech. You speak of it as if it had been a meeting of "the Republican and Douglas parties." You may rest assured that no such thing exists as a Douglas party in this State. The former members of it are now thorough Democrats. The very few exceptions, such as ———, ———, ———, and ——— are the blackest of Black Republicans. They had "a war meeting" in Lancaster on Saturday last. It was not large, though many good Democrats came to attend it. The first speaker was ———, and he led off in abuse of me. Many then left. It is represented as an overwhelming meeting, but it was, in truth, a comparatively small affair.

—— is doing Mr. Lincoln's administration great injury. He is exasperating the Democratic party against it, because he speaks as if he were on confidential terms with the President. . . . . The Democratic party are the support of the war for the Constitution and the Union, *as they were*, and yet they are denounced as traitors by such scamps as ———. This cannot long endure. But I have spent too much time on such a ———.

We have had much company during the last month; but we hear nothing of Carlisle and Riggs. How rejoiced we shall always be to see you!

My own health continues good. Miss Lane desires to be most kindly remembered to you. From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

P. S.—Would it not be well to send the carriage to New York for sale?

[MR. BUCHANAN TO DR. BLAKE.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, August 15, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I was much gratified to learn from yours of the 9th instant the favorable opinions entertained of my administration by Messrs. Saulsbury and Washington. Such opinions begin to be a little more common than they were a year ago, and they will be still more common in another year. . . . .

We are all alive here with recruiting, and many, very many of our best young men are entering the service. The present is believed to be the crisis of the war, and for this reason they come forward to do their duty.

I wish I had some news to communicate which would be agreeable to you. We are proceeding in the same "John Trot" style as when you left us. My health is as good as usual, and better than I deserve. Miss Lane desires to be most kindly remembered to you.

By the bye, I enclose you a copy of a note addressed by me to Mr. Lincoln on the 21st October last, which neither he nor his private secretary has ever had the civility to answer. I presume he has been made to believe by ——— who enjoys and will betray his confidence that I have opposed him in the war for the restoration of the Union. I would make no appeal to him; but if you are on terms with the private secretary, you might inquire after the books. They came to me from poor Benton, whose name is written in each volume.

From your friend, as ever,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. HUGHES.]

(Private.)

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, September 1, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received yours of the 29th ultimo, and regret that you should have been prevented from paying me your intended visit. I need not say you should have received a cordial welcome. I hope you may ere long pay Wheatland a visit, when, without reserve, we can talk over together the sad condition of the country, and the course which ought to be pursued by the Democratic party in the present dangerous emergency. It has ever been the bulwark of the Constitution and the Union, and its action must now be in unison with its glorious past history. My age and my position admonish me to leave it in the care and guidance of younger men, and I rejoice that you are now at the helm.

The next Congress will be by far the most important that has ever assembled under the Constitution, and I deeply regret that any difficulty should have arisen in the selection of a candidate for the York district. I had hoped that Mr. Glossbrenner might have been the man, because I know he is sufficiently firm and true for the crisis. If my interference should promise any good, I shall interfere.

Yours very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO DR. BLAKE.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, October 28, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I thank you sincerely for your kind letter of caution and advice. I now send you my answer to General Scott. This was forced upon me by a voluntary attack, which was little expected. Although I did not altogether trust him, our relations since I ordered him to Washington had been of a very friendly character.

You will please to take the document immediately to the office of the *Intelligencer*. I cannot doubt that they will publish it immediately. I leave it unsealed, so that you may first look over it, if you think proper; but you will please to seal it up before delivery. Mr. Carlisle might also see it, if this could be done without delay.

I would thank you to immediately acknowledge its receipt. I should be glad you could examine the proof; but this I presume is impossible.

I have no doubt they will publish it, though their remarks preceding Scott's statement are unfriendly. This I could not have expected from Col. Seaton.

Your friend always,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. C. E. BENNETT.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, October 29, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have this moment received your letter of the 25th instant, informing me that a number of ladies and gentlemen of Cincinnati had formed themselves into a reading club, and had honored me by adopting a resolution calling it after my name. I need not say how much this token of their regard has touched the heart of an old public servant in retirement. It shall be gratefully remembered.

The association, conducted with wise and persevering effort, cannot fail to prove highly useful both to its own members and to society. The solitary reading of an individual for mere pastime is of comparatively little value either to himself or to others. The information thus acquired soon passes away, and is forgotten, unless fixed upon the memory and impressed upon the heart by an interchange of opinions with congenial spirits. The participation of ladies in the duties of the association is calculated to exercise the most happy influence. It will promote refinement, religion and morality among its members.

May the "Buchanan Reading Club" flourish and produce good fruit long after he, whose name it bears, shall have been gathered to his fathers.

Yours very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. CAPEN.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, November 7, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Many thanks for your kind letter of the 29th ultimo. You have, no doubt, frequent occasions to defend me, and I am truly grateful that you embrace them with the ardor of friendship. None doubt your ability.

When the troubles were approaching, I determined prayerfully upon my course, from which I never departed. This was done after much reflection, and had my earnest advice and recommendations been followed, we should

have had no war. It is now alleged if I had plunged into hostilities with four or five hundred men, at an early period, this would have terrified the South into submission.

General Scott's attack upon me was most unexpected and causeless. Perhaps it may prove all for the best.

I owe you many thanks for the copy of "Plain Facts," etc., and I should feel much indebted to you for half a dozen more copies. I have looked over it with great interest. It has revived many agreeable memories.

I congratulate you on having become a grandfather, and trust that the boy may prove an honor to yourself and a distinguished and useful citizen of his country.

I do not intend to remove from this place. I simply joined a friend in purchasing a farm in Chester County, because at the moment he was unable to pay for the whole of it. He desired it for a residence, and as soon as he is able to pay for my half I shall convey it to him.

I am truly rejoiced to learn that the Government is doing you a simple act of justice. My health, thank God! continues good for a man of my age.

Miss Lane desires to be kindly remembered to you.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[TO MISS LANE.]

WHEATLAND, November 13, 1863.

MY DEAR HARRIET:—

I have received your letter of the 11th instant with Judge Black's opinion, and am glad that you have at length decided.

I enclose a letter directed to you. The Misses Johnstons will not leave until next week. By them I shall send the package for Mrs. Stevens, and another package, I presume, from the convent at Georgetown, which Father Keenan gave me a few days ago. Father Balf, his associate, brought it from Reading, where it had been carried by a Mrs. McManus. It must have been on the way for some time.

I shall go to the bank and make out your list of taxable property, including your horse and your gold watch. I know not how I omitted to enclose you the circular. Horses and watches are included in it.

Please to remember me very kindly to Mr. Royal Phelps, and tell Mr. Schell I heartily sympathize with him in the loss of his election. It is a consolation to know that the people of his district will be the greatest sufferers by his defeat.

My health and strength, I thank God, appear to be daily improving, and we get along in great tranquility and peace. Miss Hetty is very kind and attentive, and has been all I could desire since you left.

With my affectionate regards to Mrs. Roosevelt and my best respects to the Judge,

I remain yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

P. S.—Judge Black, as Dr. Nevin informs me, went to Washington on Monday last. I shall be prepared, I think, before the meeting of Congress without his aid.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO JAMES BUCHANAN HENRY.]

WHEATLAND, November 22, 1862.

MY DEAR JAMES:—

I have received your favor of the 19th instant, and am happy to learn that my manuscript is safe in Mr. Schell's hands. You suggest that it might be proper to extend it so as to embrace the history of my whole administration. I fear I am not able to undertake the task. Besides, this would require my presence in Washington, or that of some trusty person, to collect and arrange the documents. . . . .

Things move on as usual at Wheatland. Judging from the number of letters and papers I receive, I infer that my letter to General Scott has been well received by the public.

I expected ere this to have seen in the *Intelligencer* a short reply which I made to General Scott's last. I probably should have made no reply, but for his introduction of the "stolen arms." Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO DR. BLAKE.]

WHEATLAND, November 27, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your letters of the 24th and 25th instants, and I am placed under additional obligations. I am already so much in debt to you, and have so little means of payment, that I shall have to take the benefit of the insolvent law. I am also greatly obliged to my old and valued friend Colonel Seaton for his fairness and kindness.

The cause of the delay is curious, and was entirely beyond your control.

I should be sorry if General Scott would pursue the controversy further. I do not charge him with intentional misrepresentation, for of this I believe him to be incapable; but his memory is more impaired than even I had believed. He has got a great many things jumbled together, and does not seem to have any distinct ideas of what has passed since he came to Washington in December, 1860. I was rejoiced when he left the command of the army, though things do not seem to have much improved since.

I do not see ——'s paper, but I understand that he is on a new tack of downright falsehood. He announces that political assemblies have been held at Wheatland, and even mentions the names of gentlemen present, without the shadow of foundation. Judge Black and Wm. B. Reed are always two of the *dramatis personæ*. It is months since I have seen either, though I often hear from the latter, though not from the former.

I have taken no part in party politics since my return from Washington



further than to express my opinions on current events to a few personal friends and to give my vote. They (the ——'s), have now got me up for Senator, when they well know that there is no office which I should think for a moment of accepting.

I am in my usual health. Miss Lane is not at home this evening, or she would send her kindest regards.

I send you the \$2 which you paid for the *Intelligencers*.

Ever your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. CAPEN.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, December 6, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favor of the 30th ultimo, and am gratified that you think so well of my letters to General Scott. That the editor of the Boston *Post* should not have published them, is to me a matter of astonishment, little reason as I have to be astonished at any event. Throughout New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and the great West, they have been extensively republished and, I think, have done much good. New England, however, except Connecticut, is a sealed book. General Scott has, I believe, made a final reply, but it has not yet reached me. This I shall not answer, unless it contains something imperatively requiring it. I have but few copies, and I cannot supply the demand. I send you one of each.

I fear that your History of Democracy, of which I think highly, is so far behind that it will require years for you to overtake the present time. This period would furnish you ample illustrations of the conservative wisdom of its principles.

You ask me what I think of Messrs. Holt, Stanton and Dickinson. I cannot answer this question without going too much into detail.

Miss Lane desires to be very kindly remembered to you. Should you visit Washington, we should be most happy to see you, either on your way or your return.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

P. S.—Please to pardon me for having inadvertently written on two sheets.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO HON. ISAAC TOUCEY.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, December 6, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Yours of the 19th ultimo afforded me sincere pleasure. I had written to you several months ago, and from the fact it was never acknowledged, I inferred it had never been received. I should be glad to know whether I was correct.

My answers to General Scott have been well received throughout Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and the Western States, and have, I think, produced a good effect. Not so, in New York and New England, with the exception of Connecticut. I am informed they were not published in Greene's Boston *Morning Post*!! So much for gratitude.

I perceive this moment by the papers that Scott has written a third letter. I shall not reply to it unless something in it should render this absolutely necessary.

I wonder that General Scott has not alluded to the resignation of General Cass. I have not heard from the old gentleman since we separated. It may become necessary that I should allude to his offer and desire to withdraw his resignation and return to the cabinet.

In a memorandum made by me some time after the event, I state as follows: "On Monday, December 17, 1860, both Mr. Thompson and Judge Black informed me that they had held conversation with General Cass on the subject of his resignation, and that he had expressed a desire to withdraw it and return to the cabinet. I gave this no encouragement. His purpose to resign had been known for several days, and his actual resignation had been prepared three days before it was delivered to me. The world knew all about it, and had he returned the explanation would have been very embarrassing," etc. Am I correct?

I send you a copy of the joint order of Mr. Holt and yourself. I wrote to you before, as I have already stated (the letter may not have been received), on the subject of the preparation of a statement by yourself in regard to your course in the Navy Department during the last months of the administration. I know you took measures to prepare for the approaching troubles with a wise precaution. Your testimony before the Hale Committee proves this to be the fact.

Miss Lane desires to be kindly remembered to Mrs. Toucey and yourself. I wish we could enjoy the privilege of seeing you both at Wheatland.

With my kindest regards to Mrs. Toucey, I remain always,

Very respectfully, your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

P. S.—Please to acknowledge this in a line on its receipt. You can afterwards write.

[SENATOR SAULSBURY TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

"*Resolved*, That after it had become manifest that an insurrection against the United States was about to break out in some of the Southern States, James Buchanan, then President, from sympathy with the conspirators and their treasonable project, failed to take necessary and proper measures to prevent it. Wherefore he should receive the censure and condemnation of the Senate and the American people."

SENATE CHAMBER, WASHINGTON, Dec. 15, 1862.

HON. JAMES BUCHANAN:

DEAR SIR:—

Above is a copy of the resolution just offered in the Senate, by Mr. Davis, of Kentucky. We let the Republicans manage the question of its present consideration. Trumbull objected. My impression is that it will be the occasion for great misrepresentation and abuse of yourself and your administration, but whether the Senate will be so unjust as to pass the resolution, under the circumstances, may be doubtful. Those with whom you were most intimate are not here to defend you. I shall, of course, protest against it, and if you think it prudent to convey me any information to aid me in opposing the resolution, I should be happy to receive it.

Your obedient servant,

W. SAULSEURY.

Have you copies of your letters in reply to General Scott?

[MR. BUCHANAN TO DR. BLAKE.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, December 16th, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have just received your favor of the 15th instant. I think you will come to the conclusion that I ought not to publish. I have also received Mr. Davis' resolution, which I consider infamous. If, two years after a Presidential term has expired, the Senate can go back and try to condemn and execute the former incumbent, who would accept the office? Besides, the charge is wholly without foundation, as is established by my letters to General Scott. I have sent some copies of them to Senator Saulsbury, who sent me a copy of the resolution. . . . .

Unless the resolution is the result of a caucus, I should hardly think it could pass the Senate. I may have occasion for Mr. Carlisle's professional services before the termination of the proceedings.

From your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO JAMES BUCHANAN HENRY.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, December 19, 1862.

MY DEAR JAMES:—

I have received yours of the 15th instant, with your description of the property on Staten Island. I have no doubt it is a correct representation. The distance from the landing, thirty minutes' walk and two miles from your own house is an objection; but the idea of keeping four men servants and such an establishment as would be necessary, is scarcely consistent with my means. I have lost heavily by the troubles of the times, and I wish to preserve the principal of what I am worth (chiefly) for my family. Besides, in

my peculiar position, which you perfectly understand, my purchase or removal would give occasion to fresh rumors of a disagreeable character. I have about \$15,000 in currency, which I am very desirous to invest, and I wish you could assist me in doing it. I presume an investment in this property would yield but a small interest as rent. I might add that the Democracy of Pennsylvania, now just rising into power, to which I owe so much, would be outraged at my abandonment of the State in my old age.

You have doubtless witnessed the infamous attempt of Senator Davis to pass a resolution of censure on myself; and, although it has failed, the spirit to do me injustice still prevails in the Republican party. They will, at last, without the least just cause, endeavor to cast the responsibility of the war upon myself. Although this is simply ridiculous in itself, they will endeavor to make it appear a reality.

There is some malignant person in New York who sends me disagreeable slips from New York papers, which I generally burn without reading. In the last one, my eye was caught by ———, printed at the head of a low caricature on myself. I just thought that Mr. ——— had made a bad selection of ———. If this gentleman had not offered to correct Thurlow Weed's lies, I should have had this done in some other manner. The time has now passed. I presume he was afraid; and certainly he was under no obligation to assume this task.

Mr. John Quincy Adams delivered an address before the New York Historical Society on the 30th April, 1839, *which I very, very much* desire to obtain. I spoke earnestly to Mr. Schell about it the last time he was here, but I suppose he has forgotten it. I would give any reasonable price for a copy. I wish very much that you would procure me one. If this cannot be done, you might find it in some of the public libraries, and make a copy for me from pages 68 and 69, of what he says on the subject of secession.

We are getting along here in the usual style. I am not disheartened, but, trusting in God, I hope my enemies will obtain no advantage over me.

The two Harriets and Miss Hetty desire to be kindly remembered to Mrs. Henry and yourself.

With my kindest regards to her, I remain,

Yours very affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MRS. CALEB B. SMITH TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

WASHINGTON, December 26th, 1862.

HONORED SIR:—

Your check for \$30 was duly received. Your benevolent wishes have been accomplished. Our Christmas feast was all that we could have anticipated, and many a poor soldier's heart did "leap for joy."

With many thanks, I am

Yours respectfully,

MRS. CALEB B. SMITH.

Per C. M. M.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MRS. J. J. ROOSEVELT.]

WHEATLAND, February 14, 1863.

MY DEAR MADAM:—

I often hear of your health and happiness through Harriet, but have determined to hear directly from yourself, if I can accomplish this by addressing you a letter. It is now "the auld lang syne" since we first met; but to save all unpleasant feelings, I was then much older than yourself. You captivated me at once, and I have ever since remained faithful and true, and am now, in my old age, your devoted friend. I should be a happy, as I am a contented, man, were it not for the calamities of the country. Still, I enjoy the consciousness that for many years I warned my countrymen of the approaching danger; and during my administration I did every thing in my power to preserve the Union. Until I began to write history, I never fully appreciated the part which those called the Douglas Democrats had in hastening the catastrophe. Had they, at Charleston, simply consented to recognize the decision of the Supreme Court in the Dred Scott case, the Democratic party would not have been divided. This was all on which the Southern delegates insisted. They said truly that it made no difference to them, in point of fact, whether slavery was abolished in the territories by act of Congress, according to the Republican creed, or by an act of the Territorial Legislature, according to the creed of squatter sovereignty. The delegation from New York, headed by Dean Richmond, by their refusal to submit to the constitutional laws of the land, as declared by the Supreme Court, committed a fatal blunder. It would be curious to speculate what might have been the present condition of the country, had the Fernando Wood, instead of the Dean Richmond delegates, been admitted at Charleston. Still, all this affords no excuse for the conduct of the secessionists, and for their attack on Fort Sumter.

I have been twice disappointed in not seeing Prince John.\* He is now, I perceive, figuring extensively in politics, and, I trust, successfully. He is able, eloquent, witty and eccentric. He sometimes carries too much sail for his ballast, but I like him very much. Why cannot he and Judge Roosevelt take a run to Wheatland? How much good it would do me to see them!

I have not heard from our much valued friend, Augustus Schell, for a long time.

Is it not strange that among a population so numerous, and so intelligent and enterprising as ours, the war has not yet produced one great General. McClellan is the best among them, unless it may be Rosecrans. During the French Revolution there sprang up, often from the ranks, Generals of the first order, possessing dash and strategy, and capable of conducting a war of invasion in the most efficient manner.

I sometimes hear of Lady Ousley, through Miss Lane. I rejoice that her daughter is so well married, and shall ever hear of her health and prosperity

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\* Mr. John Van Buren, to whom this *soubriquet* was long applied.

with the greatest satisfaction. When you write, please to remember me to her in the kindest terms. Remember me, also, kindly to Sir William.

Miss Lane feels the death of her brother very sensibly.

It would require much ingenuity to reconcile the apparently conflicting statements of M. Mercier and Mr. Seward. These will not, I think, lead to any serious consequences. The difficulty here arises from the modern practice of publishing indiscriminately diplomatic correspondence.

Please to remember me most kindly to the Judge, and believe me ever to be

Respectfully and affectionately your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO NAHUM CAPEN.]

WHEATLAND, February 23, 1863.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received yours of the 16th instant, and I can scarcely tell you how much obliged I feel for it and the enclosed papers. In consequence of your information, I have been able to find everything I sought.

I feel how important it would be for myself to publish a collection of my speeches on the different subjects to which you refer, and especially on slavery; but I am too old and too lazy to undertake the task. There are a few of these speeches which might be useful to the country when they reach the point of examining seriously the acts of the present administration outside of the war.

Miss Lane and myself were highly gratified with your last interesting visit. You became more like a member of the little family than ever before. The information of which you possess so inexhaustible a store was communicated in a familiar manner, and we enjoyed your conversation very much. How delighted we should always be to see you, but your distance forbids the hope that we can often enjoy this pleasure.

Miss Lane left me on Tuesday last on a visit to her Uncle Edward near Philadelphia. I sent your letter after her.

I wish I had some news to communicate which might prove interesting to you. I know nothing of this kind for the present, and to speculate concerning the future in the terrible condition of our country would be vain labor.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. LEIPER.]

WHEATLAND, March 19, 1863.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favor of the 12th instant, and always rejoice to hear of your good health and prosperity.

I have been absent for a few days on a visit to a friend in Chester county,

and on my return home I was rejoiced to find Governor Porter. We passed a very pleasant time together, talking of old times, and of the present as well as the past.

Miss Lane has not been at home for several weeks. She has been on a visit to her uncle and his family at Oxford Church.

I wish I had some news to communicate which would be interesting to you. I have almost ceased to speculate upon the future condition of our country, and yet I entertain much hope that all will yet be well. I cannot entertain the idea of a division of the Union. May God, in His good providence, restore it!

From your friend, as ever,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[TO MISS LANE.]

WHEATLAND, March 20, 1863.

MY DEAR HARRIET:—

I send you a letter just received from Mrs. Roosevelt in the very condition it came to hand, and yet I scarcely believe it has been violated. The envelope directed to me was open just as I send it.

The talented and faithful Spencer will soon deliver a lecture on temperance. He has invited the girls to attend, and promised to procure them tickets. That it will be able and eloquent you will not doubt.

Two or three days ago I received a letter from old Mary Wall. She writes to me, she says, because Miss Hetty and yourself have been married and left Wheatland. Who are the happy and well governed husbands she does not mention. Poor old thing! She must be in a forlorn condition. I have enclosed her letter to Doctor Blake, and requested him to inquire into her situation. Miss Hetty says she might probably be admitted into Christ Church Hospital in West Philadelphia. She is, I believe, a good Episcopalian, and has several hundred dollars, if any body would take the trouble of collecting it for her. I sincerely pity her.

Please to return the enclosed to brother Edward. Your purchases, Miss Hetty says, have all arrived.

With love to all, yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO DR. BLAKE.]

WHEATLAND, March 21, 1863.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I am much indebted to you for the *Daily Globe* of April, 1862, containing your letter to the editor. I was not aware that this had been published by Mr. Rives, and I think you were, also, ignorant of it. But it is just the thing.

I enclose you a letter, which I have received from Mary Wall. Pray keep it a profound secret that Miss Lane and Miss Hetty have both been married. I should like to know who are their husbands. I pity the old woman, and

would cheerfully contribute to her wants, but I cannot pay her expenses to England. Besides, she would be in greater want of money there than she is here. There is an excellent Episcopal Institution for such persons in Philadelphia, and I think through the influence of Miss Lane she might obtain a home in it. What property has she? I cannot make this out from her letter. Is she a member in full communion with the Episcopal Church? Miss Hetty thinks she is. Miss Harriett has been absent for some time. From your benevolent heart I know you will take pleasure in answering these questions. Above all, do not let the old woman know anything of the Episcopal Institution, lest she might be disappointed. I do not know that they would charge her anything for her living; but if they should, it would be a trifle. If she had anything to give, this might facilitate her admission.

I very often think most affectionately of you and other friends in Washington. But why should I tax their time by asking them to write answers to letters of mine containing no news. Correspondence ought to be an interchange of equivalents between friends. I have no news to give, and to write letters on the beauty of virtue and on the fitness of things to those who are already virtuous, and are just what they ought to be, would be a vain labor. I wish I had something to communicate which might provoke a long letter from you in reply. My life is tranquil and monotonous, although I see much company, especially from my own State. Ere a month, I shall enter my seventy-second year, should I live so long, and my health is excellent, considering my age. If you could know how glad I should be to see you, and to talk over with you past and present events, you would never fail to come this way on your route to New Jersey and New York.

I regret very much the fate of your able, honest, and time-honored court. I feel a warm personal regard for C. J. Dunlop. Such acts of wanton tyranny will surely return to plague the inventors. There will be a "tit for tat." Why could not the Judge Advocate General, with the rank, pay, and emoluments of a colonel of cavalry, have saved his brother-in-law?

I perceive by the *Intelligencer* that Judge Black has gained his great Quick-silver Mine cause. This alone ought to make him rich.

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO DR. BLAKE.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, April 10, 1863.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I ought ere this to have acknowledged your very welcome letter of the 21st and 26th ultimos. Your letters are always gratifying to me, and I regret that I can give you so little in return. To attempt to furnish you political news would be truly sending coals to Newcastle.

I do not think it necessary at present to republish your letter in refutation of Mr. Fessenden's statement. Thanks to your kindness, it is now of record



in the *Globe*, and I presume it has been of course transferred to the *Congressional Globe*. You might look.

My defence has been greatly enlarged, and will be published in due time. I do not think this is the proper moment. Thanks to General Scott, I need not now be in so great a hurry.

I am truly rejoiced to learn that our good and large hearted friend Sullivan has recovered his health. May blessings rest upon his "frosty pow!"

I am sorry to learn that Dr. Jones has had a severe attack of gout. . . . . He is one of my most esteemed friends, and is a faithful and true man. May he live and prosper for many years!

Miss Lane had an idea of visiting Mr. Berghman's, but not since the death of her brother. She is still in Philadelphia, but I expect her home in a week or ten days. The loss of her brother has made a deep impression upon her. She, although the youngest, is now the last of her father's children.

Our friend Carlisle sent me the brief of his argument in the case of the *Brilliant*. I perused it at the time with great care and great satisfaction. His points are presented in lucid and convincing order; and in my humble judgment he ought to have gained the cause. I know not why I did not acknowledge the brief at the time it was received. This I ought to have done. Judge Black, who was here yesterday, spoke of his argument in the highest terms. By the bye, the Judge really seems to be embarrassed with his money. He is at a loss to know what to do with it. I gave him advice on this subject, but whether he will follow it, I know not. I am truly sorry that Mr. Carlisle has felt it to be his duty to refuse to take the oath prescribed by the new court. I do not know what it contains. If he cannot conscientiously take it, there is an end of the question. If he has refused simply because the court has no right to require it, I think he has not acted prudently. He is an able and honorable man, and a discriminating and powerful lawyer, and I fear he may suffer in a pecuniary view. Please to remember me to him in the most friendly terms.

Poor Mary Wall! If she has determined to return to England, I shall cheerfully contribute to pay her expenses. You may set me down for \$20.

Could you not pay me a visit, and bring Mr. Carlisle with you, when the spring fairly opens?

From your friend, as ever,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

P. S.—Miss Hetty, of whom you kindly inquire, has entirely recovered her health, and is now larger than I ever saw her. I cannot keep her in the house, or prevent her from working in the garden or about the lawn.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. NAHUM CAPEN.]

WHEATLAND, May 8, 1863.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I owe you many thanks for President Lord's picture of Abolitionism. It is clearly and forcibly written, and proceeding from a New England clergyman, it is almost miraculous.

I fear you are too sanguine in predicting that in another year there will be great changes in favor of Democracy in the New England States. The clergy have taught the people there that slavery is a mortal sin demanding extirpation.

The mass of the Democracy in this State is as true to the Constitution and the Union as the needle to the pole. With the exception of a few fanatics, they are not extreme. They will obey the laws, and await the process of the ballot-box for redress. Unless something unexpected should occur, they will elect their governor in October by a large majority.

From the current of events, it is to be apprehended that it will be long before the Democracy can obtain a majority in the Senate. The people already begin to speculate upon this subject. They say it would be unjust that the six New England States with a population scarcely greater than that of New York, should have a representation in the Senate equal to that of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri combined, not to speak of Western Virginia, and the thinly peopled Territories soon to be admitted as States. For my own part I am willing to follow where the Constitution leads, trusting to Providence for the final result. Still I should be rejoiced if even a single Senator could be elected from New England.

Miss Lane came home for a few days a brief time ago; but returned to her uncle's to be confirmed and admitted as a member of the Episcopal Church. When she next returns, I have no doubt she will be too happy to write to you.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. CAPEN.]

WHEATLAND, May 18, 1863.

MY DEAR SIR:—

In answer to your request of the 11th instant:—I regret that I have not a single copy of the Documents to which you refer, except those forming a part of the entire set of Documents for 1860–61. It is but a few weeks since I gave the last copy to a friend. I have received Judge Parker's Letters and Address, for which please to accept my thanks. You inform me in your note of the 14th, that you enclose me a slip containing facts upon a subject alluded to in our conversation when you were at Wheatland. *This I have not received.*

Miss Lane has not yet returned and my evenings are rather solitary. Still I resign myself in a philosophic and, I trust, Christian spirit to the privations inseparable from old age. I wish, with all my heart, that I had a few neighbors like yourself.

I try to think as little of public affairs as possible; but they will ever intrude. If I could be of any service, I should sacrifice all to restore the Union; but as I can contribute nothing towards the accomplishment of this most desirable object, I relieve my mind from the subject as much as possible.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MISS LANE.]

MY DEAR MISS LANE:—

I enclose you a letter from James S. Lane, which, under your general license, so far as your Uncle John's estate is concerned, I took the liberty of opening.

Lancaster is in a state of agitation and alarm. They have determined, on motion of Mr. Hager, to defend the city to the last extremity. I do not consider the danger great, so far as we are concerned. It may be otherwise at Harrisburg. You had better remain at your Uncle Edward's; because if you were to return home, if there were any danger, I should send you back. I suppose you are aware that Doctor Nevin has sent Alice and Blanche to New York. I do not think we are in any serious danger in Lancaster; but if we were, you could not by possibility remain.

Mr. Swarr is here, and I want to send this to town by him. In haste

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. CAPEN.]

WHEATLAND, July 8, 1863.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your note of the 5th instant, with the article enclosed. This I have read with much satisfaction. It is the philosophy of politics applied to our present unfortunate condition.

It is probable the rebels might have paid a flying visit to Lancaster had not the bridge across the Susquehanna at Wrightsville been burnt down. I remained quietly at home, and would not have removed under any circumstances. They were within eleven miles of us.

I am at a loss for precise dates, which you can supply. When was the Anti-Slavery Society organized at Boston, and when did Thompson arrive in this country, and how long did he remain? By answering these questions, if convenient, you will greatly oblige me.

Miss Lane is now at home, and desires to be most kindly remembered to you. My health is as good as usual.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO DR. BLAKE.]

WHEATLAND, July 23, 1863.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received the *National Intelligencer* containing the well deserved eulogy on our deceased friend Mr. Sullivan. I saw a notice of his death some days before in the *Philadelphia Age*, and immediately wrote a letter of sympathy to his widow, an excellent woman, worthy of such a husband. I felt

deeply the death of Mr. Sullivan, from our ancient friendly social relation which had continued without interruption for many years.

By the bye, you do not seem to have been aware, as I was not myself until a few days ago, that my franking privilege had been abolished. It was first brought to my notice by the receipt of letters and packages in the form of letters marked with double postage because not prepaid. The Postmaster General, in his instructions, ought to have noticed this. It was hardly consistent with the dignity of Congress, whilst retaining the privilege of its own members, to strike at Mrs. Harrison, if she is still living, Mrs. Polk, Mr. Fillmore, General Pierce, and myself. But I care nothing about it. This privilege, in all its forms, ought to be entirely abolished. Members of Congress have abused it to an enormous extent. Neither the Queen nor any member of the British Parliament can frank a letter.

I have not been so well for some days. My rheumatism has partially returned with strong symptoms of dyspepsia. I propose going to the Bedford Springs some day next week, should nothing occur to prevent.

The draft gives much dissatisfaction in this county, especially among poor men with large families dependent for support on their labor. The laws, however, will not here be forcibly resisted.

How glad I should be to meet you, and other old Washington friends; but this seems to be impossible.

Unless some great and unforeseen change should take place, Judge Woodward will be elected governor of our State by a large majority.

Miss Lane desires me to present her kindest regards.

From your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. SCHELL.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, July 25, 1863.

MY DEAR SIR:—

It is so long since I have heard from you that I wish to know what has become of you, and how you are enjoying yourself.

Although taking no active part in politics, I have yet been observing, with great interest, the events that are passing. I have been much gratified with Governor Seymour's course, but fear he is now about to fall into an error. The conscription law, though unwise and unjust in many of its provisions, is not, in my opinion, unconstitutional. The Constitution confers upon Congress in the clearest terms the power "to raise and support armies," without any other limitation except that "no appropriation of money to that use shall be for a longer term than two years." How shall these armies be raised? Can this only be done by voluntary enlistment? Or may not Congress resort to a conscription law as a necessary and proper means, such as is employed by other nations for this purpose?

I think the confusion on the subject has arisen from the blending the

restricted power over the militia, an entirely distinct question, with that of the general power in Congress to raise armies.

But I merely make these suggestions. It would be very unfortunate if, after the present administration have committed so many clear violations of the Constitution, the Democratic party should place itself in opposition to what I think must be the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States on this question.

I have not been so well as usual for the last few days. I intend to go to Bedford towards the end of next week, if nothing should prevent, and shall take Miss Hetty along with me, whose robust health has been giving way for some time past. Miss Lane and Miss Buchanan will remain at home. I would request you to accompany me there, but I know the company will be small, and the place would not be agreeable to you, under these circumstances.

From the last letter received from James Henry I fear he will lose his excellent wife. I sympathize with him deeply in this gloomy prospect. Her loss to him would be irreparable. May Heaven avert it!

Cannot my fifteen Tennessee five per cent. bonds be now sold at a rate bearing a just proportion to the price of the six per cent. bonds?

"The signs of the times" in this State indicate the election of Judge Woodward by a large majority. Unless some great and unexpected change should take place, such I confidently predict will be the result.

Miss Lane and Miss Buchanan desire to be very kindly remembered to you.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. BAKER.]

WHEATLAND, July 26, 1863.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have no news to communicate of the least importance, and write only to keep the chain of friendship bright between you and myself. My health has not been as good as usual for the last few days, but the visit to the Bedford Springs will, I think, be of service to me. The fabled fountain to restore youth has never yet been discovered, and there is no remedy for old age but Christian philosophy and resignation. By the bye, should you have business at Broad Top, how happy I should be to have your company thus far, or until the end of the journey, should you desire to use the water. There has been, and probably will be, but little company there, and Farmer Baker must, I presume, stay at home at this busy season. We propose to leave on Thursday next. I shall take Miss Hetty with me, whose health has been declining for some time. Miss Lane and Annie Buchanan will remain at Wheatland.

What has become of the visit of Mr. Read and yourself, from which I had anticipated so much pleasure? I have heard nothing either from or of Mr. Dillon for a long time. Doctor Sample passed a day and night with me last week. We had a most agreeable time talking over "old times" and our memories of men of the past generation. He is old and feeble in body, and

somewhat deaf, but his intellect is still clear. He seems to be contented with his lot, and in him Christianity has disarmed the fear of death.

. . . . .  
 . . . . .  
 . . . . .

Please to remember me in the kindest terms to Mrs. Baker, Mrs. Hopkins and the other members of your most agreeable family. So much for Sunday morning before going to church.

Ever your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MISS LANE.]

BEDFORD SPRINGS, August 3, 1863.

MY DEAR HARRIET:—

We arrived here safe and sound on Friday last before dinner. I hardly ever passed a more uncomfortable day than that on which I left, having suffered the whole day with a violent diarrhœa. At night Mrs. Baker gave me a dose of your friend Brown's Anti-Cholera mixture, which cured me outright. The water has had its usual good effect upon me, and I think I needed it much. No healing fountain can cure old age; but with God's blessing it may assist in gently sloping the way which leads to death.

The company here consists of about one hundred and fifty, and I think there is fully that number. There are many sensible and agreeable people among them; but they are not very gay. On Saturday night they made the first attempt to get up a cotillion, and it partly succeeded, but they wanted the buoyancy and brilliancy of former times.

There are several naughty secession girls here from Baltimore,—some of them very bright. My principal amusement has been with them, and I am really inclined to believe they give General Schenck a hard time of it. The stories they tell of how they provoked him are truly amusing. They praise General Wool, and I have no doubt they flatter him into a compliance with many of their wishes. They speak rather contemptuously of our friend General Dix, but Schenck is their abomination.

I treat them playfully, and tell them I love them so, that it would be impossible for me ever to consent to part from them, and that the shocking idea has never once entered my head of living in a separate confederacy from them. I am like Ruth, and that they must not entreat me from following after them. We must be one and indivisible. I hear accounts from the other side, and it is certain the Baltimore women must give General Schenck a rough road to travel.

Our little party is very agreeable. Mrs. Nevin is as gay as a girl let loose from school after a long session of hard service. I could hardly tell you how much she enjoys herself. Miss Hetty gets along quietly and well. Her man-

ners are ladylike, and she behaves with perfect propriety. Mrs. Baker is very good and very ladylike; and Miss Swarr is modest but cheerful. I need not speak of Messrs. Swarr, Baker, Carpenter, and North. We are all grateful. There have been many kind inquiries after you, but a watering place is like the world, even the grandest performers are soon forgotten.

Mr. Babcock, of the Yeates Institute, preached here last night, but I did not hear him. Those who did, say he preached very well. I never saw him to my knowledge.

I am treated by all with kindness and respect. I saw Mrs. Patton and Miss Hamilton on Saturday evening. The health of the latter is evidently improving.

Give my love to Miss Annie, Elizabeth Speer Buchanan, and remember me kindly to Mrs. Fahnestock. I hope you are all getting along happily.

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. LEIPER.]

WHEATLAND, September 22, 1863.

MY DEAR SIR:—

It afforded me great pleasure to learn from yours of the 14th instant, that you still enjoy health and happiness. May this yet continue for years to come! I have recently had a severe and very painful attack of rheumatism, but it has nearly passed away.

I met Mr. Kelly at the Bedford Springs, and we talked very kindly of you and yours. I found my old friends there as kind and as enthusiastic as ever. My visit was very agreeable.

I cannot anticipate the result of the Governor's election, as I was able to do in former years, when I took an active part in politics. The news, however, is generally cheering. It is the most important State election which has ever been held in Pennsylvania. God grant us a safe deliverance!

I saw Judge Woodward when he was in Lancaster at our great meeting on Thursday last, though I did not attend the meeting. He seems to be in fine spirits, and will, if elected, make an excellent Governor. Governor Porter and Judge Black were with us. The Governor's health is still good, and he is as shrewd and observant as ever. Judge Black's speech will, I think, make a noise in the world. It is able and eloquent, and *very strong*.

I hope nothing may occur to prevent you from visiting me the next time you entertain so good an intention. This I hope may ere long occur.

Miss Lane desires to be very kindly remembered to you. We expect a visit to-day from Sir Henry Holland, and she is busy in making preparations.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

P. S.—I saw an account of the great meeting to which you refer, and was happy to perceive that you are still in the harness.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO DR. BLAKE.]

WHEATLAND, December 5, 1863.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Your favor of the 24th October was well worthy of an immediate answer, but my life here glides along so quietly and tranquilly as to afford no incidents worth communicating.

The quarrel among the Republicans to which you refer will not, I think, subserve the immediate interests of the Democratic party. They cannot afford to divide. The main object of them all is to abolish every vestige of slavery, and they differ only as to the best means of accomplishing it. The difference between them, as I understand it, is between tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee. Whilst the Sumnerites would convert the States in rebellion into Territories, to be governed as such under the laws of Congress, the Blairites, preserving the name of States, would place them under the military government of the President. In either case, they can only be restored to the Union provided slavery is abolished. The more extreme party will probably prevail, because such is the nature and history of revolutions. The Blairs will be crushed, unless they shall speedily repent. This they will not hesitate to do, should their interests so dictate.

The Democratic party must rely upon themselves and await events. I see the Democratic members have been holding meetings preparatory to the assemblage of Congress. On their prudence, firmness and decision much will depend. Their platform, if it be wise, will give tone to the party throughout the country. With the vanity of age, I think I could construct one which would unite and strengthen the party, but no person consults me on such a subject.

I agree with you that, however much we may condemn Secretary Chase's official conduct, he is a gentleman by education and personal demeanor. He is, in my judgment, by far the ablest member of the cabinet, not excepting even Abraham himself. The skill, however, with which he has obtained loans and managed the paper money machine, will only make the crash, when it shall occur, the more terrific. His adroit management may delay, but cannot prevent it. As long as he can issue greenbacks with one hand as currency, and receive them with the other for national loans, the crazy vessel may be kept afloat.

Well! we see from the papers that Washington is to be gay and extravagant beyond all former example during the approaching winter. Shoddy will make a grand display. How much your society, formerly the best in the country, must have changed! Mrs. Ogle Tayloe was here about a fortnight ago, sighing over the memory of past days.

We have been more gay than usual at Wheatland for the last few months, and have seen a good deal of company. I have not been out of the county since you were here, but they will have it that I am now in England.

I have thought several times of accepting your kind offer to attend to ———. He is an ungrateful little scamp, and no reason exists why I should



not sell his property. I think I shall soon send you all the papers which will prove how much he has bamboozled me. I wish you would talk to Mr. Riggs upon the subject.

Miss Lane and Miss Hetty both desire to be most kindly remembered to you. We all unite in the expression of regret that we cannot see you oftener.

With my kindest regards to Doctor Jones, I remain,

Always your friend, -

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO HON. GEORGE G. LEIPER.]

WHEATLAND, December 21, 1863.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your kind favor, and am always rejoiced to learn your continued health and happiness. May you live to enjoy a merry Christmas and a happy New Year, and a number of such, until, in a good old age, you shall be peacefully gathered to your fathers in well-grounded Christian hope.

The storm of persecution against me, as you intimate, has nearly spent itself, though the *Herald* and the *Tribune*, both of which I take, occasionally strike me a blow. My time will, however, soon come. I am now much more fully prepared than I was a year ago. I view it as a merciful dispensation of Providence that the report of General Scott to President Lincoln has been published during my lifetime, and this through his own folly. . . .

Miss Lane desires her kindest remembrance to you. I need not say we shall always be most happy to see and welcome you at Wheatland.

Your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO DR. BLAKE.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, December 31, 1863.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favor of the 28th instant, and am content to leave the ——— affair to be managed by Mr. Riggs in the manner he proposes. Still I should be much obliged to you to keep a sharp look out over the matter. The conduct of Leonard and his wife has been all it should not have been.

We now seem to be rapidly treading the paths of all former Republics. A large standing army necessarily produces some ambitious commander-in-chief possessing its confidence. Fortunately for the country, no general having the pre-eminence over all the rest has yet made his appearance, unless Grant may prove to be the coming man. At the termination of the war, it will probably be more difficult to get clear of the army than it was to raise it.

The time has now arrived when with perfect safety the Democrats in Congress might erect a secure platform; but will they do it? What can be expected from a party at the head of which is . . . . A man of the first

consideration ought to have been selected as . . . . ; and above all, he ought not to have been one of those who broke up the National Convention at Charleston. Mr. Lincoln would be less dangerous to the Republic than an unprincipled military chieftain whom the army would follow to any extremity. My health is as usual. Miss Lane desires to be kindly remembered to you.

Ever your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. CAPEN.]

WPEATLAND, January 14, 1864.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Miss Lane and myself have received your Christmas greetings with peculiar pleasure, and trust you may live many years in health and prosperity.

With you I believe that the madness of men will eventually yield to conservative counsels; *but not soon*. In this respect, I differ both from you and Governor Seymour. I yet perceive no evidence of a change so happy. It may, however, come suddenly with the crash of the paper system, which, sooner or later, is inevitable. The Democratic party is not yet prepared to act with power and unanimity. They would, at the present moment, divide, should they attempt to erect a platform. And yet, in my opinion, the time has arrived when a platform could be constructed which would stand against all external shocks and would carry the principles of the glorious old party triumphantly through the breakers.

Have you ever thought of the danger to our institutions from the disbandment of a standing army of a million of men, one-fourth at least being negroes? Will they patiently and quietly consent, with arms in their hands, to return to the labors and duties of private life, and to earn their living by the sweat of their brow? What does history teach in this respect? I trust in God it may be so.

As to Christianity: it seems now to consist in preaching war instead of peace. In New England, I presume, the masses are tolerably united in favor of the gospel of war. In this portion of the world there is considerable division, though the higher law doctrine of the abolitionist would seem to be in the ascendant.

The state of public opinion in this quarter was naively illustrated the other day by a young lady who called to see me. She said that the church in their town (Presbyterian) had been vacant for several months, though they gave a good salary. "When," said she, "a preacher comes to us on trial, and we are pleased with him, after he goes away, they begin to inquire whether he is a Republican or Democrat. If found to be a Republican, the Democrats oppose him, and if found to be a Democrat, the Republicans oppose him; and so, between the two, it is hard to tell whether we shall ever have another preacher."

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. CAPEN.]

WHEATLAND, January 27, 1864.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I am just recovering from a rather severe illness and was only able on yesterday to leave my room. I find your two letters of January 16 and January 20, and am scarcely in a condition to do more than thank you for them.

My publication is ready for the press; but the Democrats have made no issue on which to fight the Presidential battle. . . . . The Republicans care not a button how much we complain of their unconstitutional measures, their change of the war from its original purposes, etc., etc., so long as we give them a vigorous material support. From present appearances, Mr. Lincoln will be re-elected, unless some Republican military chieftain should supply his place, or our finances should break down.

All I have to say in regard to the Floyd acceptances is that the "gentleman of high respectability" is altogether mistaken in regard to myself, and, I have no doubt, is equally so in regard to Governor Toucey.

A Senator first informed me that drafts on the War Department, payable at a future day and accepted by Governor Floyd, were on change in New York. I immediately sent for Mr. Floyd and asked him if it were true. He told me that Russell & Co., in order to enable them to send provisions to the army in Utah, had to anticipate their credit, and as these drafts were only payable after the money had been earned, there could be no danger. There were but three or four of them. I asked him by what law he was authorized to issue such acceptances. He said there was no law for it, but it had been the practice of the office. I told him it must at once be discontinued—that if there was no law for it, it was against law. He told me the few drafts already accepted should be immediately paid, and he would never issue another. I rested satisfied, and was greatly astonished when, some months after, the fraud was discovered, and the subject placed before the committee of the House. Mr. Holt, in all he did, acted under my direction and with my assent.

Miss Lane desires to be most kindly remembered to you. I wish I could drop in for a day at Mount Ida.

Ever your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. SCHELL.]

WHEATLAND, February 12, 1864.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favor of the 9th instant. I had supposed that James Henry would have informed you of the reason I had not visited New York. When making the necessary preparations to leave home, I had a violent and very painful attack of rheumatic gout. Although I have now recovered from

this, I still walk with difficulty, and am not yet in a condition to visit your city.

I agree with you that the future of the Democratic party is discouraging. At the moment when it was clearly demonstrated that the administration, departing from the principle of conducting the war for the restoration of the Union as it was, and the Constitution as it is, had resolved to conduct it for the subjugation of the Southern States and the destruction of slavery, the party had then an opportunity of making a noble, and probably a successful issue with their opponents. That time has now passed, and the leaders of our party, beginning at New York, notwithstanding the change in the programme of our opponents, are still nearly as demonstrative in the support of the war as the Republicans. No party can succeed without a great issue, broadly placed before the people.

We are getting on here as usual, just as you left us. Harriet Buchanan is still with us, and you are often the subject of agreeable conversation in our little group.

I send you a check for the wine, and remain, very respectfully,

Your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. CAPEN.]

WHEATLAND, March 14, 1864.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your letter of the 1st instant. You may well have expected to hear from me ere this, in answer to yours of the 1st February. I am sorry to say, however, that, about the time of its receipt, I again had an attack of rheumatism in my legs still more violent and painful than the former, which confined me for a considerable time to my bed and to my chamber, because I could not set my feet on the ground. Thank God! I think I have entirely recovered from it, except that I still hobble in my gait. I am, however, daily improving.

Would that I were able to visit your Arcadia in the month of June and receive your cordial welcome; but this is an enjoyment which I fear is not reserved for me.

I owe you many thanks for your very kind offer to cause my record to be stereotyped and to superintend the work. Your services would be invaluable, but I do not consider it of sufficient importance for stereotyping. By the bye, a friend the other day sent me a copy of Appleton's Cyclopædia for 1861, which I find, to my surprise, contains a tolerably fair representation of the last months of my administration, so far as the facts were known to the author. It is, however, greatly deficient in many particulars. Still, there is throughout a spirit of candor manifested, to which I have not been lately accustomed.

I hope your meeting in New York may result in good for the country and

the Democratic party. So far as I can learn and observe, there will be very great difficulty in erecting a platform on which the party can unite. It now embraces all shades of opinion, from the prosecution of the war with as much vigor as the Republicans, notwithstanding the violations of the Constitution, down to peace [with the Confederate government], which means neither more nor less than recognition. I say that this means recognition, because I entertain not the least idea that the South would return to the Union, if we were to offer to restore them with all the rights which belonged to them, as expounded by the Supreme Court, at the time of their secession. Besides, I regret to say, many good Democrats in Pennsylvania begin to be inoculated with abolition principles. I could construct a platform which would suit myself; but what is right and what is practicable are two very different things. For the latter we must await the course of events until a short time before the meeting of the convention. I entertain a warm regard both for Mr. Reed and Mr. O'Connor, but I believe both may be called extreme peace men. Have you ever reflected upon what would be the embarrassments of a Democratic administration, should it succeed to power with the war still existing and the finances in their present unhappy condition?

The Democrats of New Hampshire, with General Pierce, have fought a noble battle worthy of a better fate. I was much pleased with the article you were kind enough to send me.

Miss Lane desires to be most kindly remembered to you. Whilst it is highly improbable that we shall drop in upon you at Mount Ida, I hope it is certain you may drop in upon us at Wheatland during the approaching spring or summer. The bluebirds and other songsters are now singing around me, and the buds are ready to burst; but yet we have all kinds of weather in the course of a single day.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MRS. VIELE.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, May 2, 1864.

MY DEAR MADAM :—

I must crave a thousand pardons for not having complied with your request and sent you my autograph, with a sentiment for your album. I need not assign the reasons for this omission, but if you should think it proceeded from want of respect for yourself, you would be greatly in error. On the contrary, although I have never enjoyed the pleasure of your acquaintance, yet from what I have learned of your character and intellectual accomplishments, I shall be proud to hold a place in your personal esteem.

Congratulating you on the unexampled success of the New York Fair for the relief of our brave and disabled soldiers, to which you yourself have contributed in no small degree, I remain,

Yours very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. TOUCEY.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, May 13, 1864.

MY DEAR SIR:—

It is long since I have heard from you, and I desire to learn that Mrs. Toucey and yourself are as comfortable and happy as my earnest wishes prompt.

During the past winter I have suffered severe attacks of painful rheumatism in both legs. The disease has finally retreated into my right hand and arm, and is now, I trust in God, passing away. I still, however, write with considerable pain.

I earnestly desire that you could be with me for a few days. The publication which I propose to make has for some time been substantially, I may almost say, literally prepared. I think the simple statement of facts in their natural order affords a conclusive vindication of our administration for the last four months of its duration. The preface contains a historical sketch of the rise and progress of abolition, of the Charleston Convention, of the Peace Convention, etc., etc. I have had no person to assist me in its preparation, to make suggestions, or even to verify the facts, though these are mostly official. . . . .

The season is delightful, and why cannot Mrs. Toucey and yourself pay us a visit? Did we part at Washington never again to enjoy the society of each other? I trust in God not. . . . .

The Judge, notwithstanding all this, is perfectly true to our administration. He talks very openly and without disguise against the present administration, and, before our last gubernatorial election, made a speech of greater severity and power against Lincoln (and published it) than any delivered throughout the campaign. Judge Black and his family visit me occasionally, and he is just as agreeable as ever. His practice in the Supreme Court has been very lucrative, and he is now becoming a rich man.

Miss Lane unites with me in cordial regards to Mrs. Toucey, and expresses an ardent hope that you may both pay us a visit.

From your friend, always,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. TOUCEY TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

HARTFORD, May 25, 1864.

MY DEAR SIR:

I was very happy to receive your letter of the 13th inst. It gave me information which I had long been wishing to obtain. Let me rejoice with you that you have regained your accustomed power of locomotion without the discomfort of bodily pain. I think the time has come when the history of the last four months of your eventful administration may be given to the public, with good results. Mrs. Toucey's health is so delicate and precarious, that I fear we shall not be able to accept your kind invitation, for which we

are very grateful to you and to Miss Lane. Still, I trust that we shall meet again and enjoy the opportunity of conferring together upon the events of the last seven years, so interesting to us all. It will be my greatest pleasure to contribute anything in my power to the history you have in hand, although I think you need no aid from any quarter; and as to giving "the last finishing touches," that is what you have always been accustomed to do yourself; and while I appreciate your kindness, it would be absurd for me to think of aiding Praxiteles to give the finishing polish to his work. I send you herewith a printed copy of my testimony before the Senate Committee, which embraces all the facts with regard to Norfolk, Pensacola, and, incidentally, the Home squadron. The testimony was divided into two parts by the committee for their convenience. The note appended to it is strictly correct, and in three lines answers the grossly false accusation that the navy was sent abroad in the interest of secession. The truth is, the squadrons at the different foreign stations were all of them very small, had not been augmented in proportion to the increase of our commerce, and none of them could be diminished without sacrificing its safety and the interests and safety of those engaged in it. It is not, I suppose, now treason to say "Blessed are the peacemakers." It was the cardinal point of your policy to preserve the peace of the country, and thereby most surely preserve the union of these States on the existing basis of the Constitution; and it would have been a most startling departure from that policy to have recalled our foreign squadrons, and thus, with lunatic rashness, defeat it at the outset, and precipitate at once the wretched consequences which have since followed its abandonment, to the utter ruin of the country. I thank God that we can wash our hands of any such criminality. There is one fact which has never transpired—which at the time was shrouded in the greatest secrecy—which was not communicated to any of my colleagues in the cabinet—which rested with the late gallant Commander Ward, a friend of mine from his youth, who fell on the Potomac in the early stage of the war. He was stationed at New York in command of the receiving ship. It was arranged with him that, on receiving a telegraphic despatch from me, he should, in the course of the following night, set sail from New York with a force of small vessels, and relieve the garrison of Fort Sumter, entering the harbor in the night and anchoring, if possible, under the guns of the fort. He sought the desperate enterprise with the greatest enthusiasm, and was willing to sacrifice his life, saying that the sacrifice would be the best inheritance he could leave to his wife and children. He left Washington, after repeated interviews with me, with instructions to select his officers, select and prepare his men on board of the receiving ship, and make every preparation which he could make without exciting suspicion, so that he could set sail in a few hours, whenever the emergency should arise. In regard to the wish of General Cass to withdraw his resignation, I knew nothing personally, but remember well that the subject was brought up in cabinet meeting; that Judge Black and Mr. Thompson seemed to know all about it, as if they were privy to it; and that after some discussion you deemed it inadmissible. The times are

sadly out of joint. I had not supposed it possible that any administration could, in the short space of three years, do the work of destruction so effectually. Still I trust that, in the boundless stores of Infinite mercy, there may yet be some deliverance for the country.

Mrs. Toucey unites with me in the kindest regards to yourself and Miss Lane. I am, my dear Sir, with the highest consideration and regard, always

Your friend,

ISAAC TOUCEY.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. LEIPER.]

WHEATLAND, June 20th, 1864.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I am always rejoiced to hear that you are still in the enjoyment of a green and happy old age, surrounded by grateful and prosperous children and grandchildren. May this long be the lot from Providence of Mrs. Leiper and yourself!

You inquire for my health, and I am glad to inform you it is as good as I can expect. After suffering much during the past winter and early spring from rheumatic gout, I have been for several weeks free from pain, though I still hobble a little in walking.

You inform me you have a good deal to talk to me about when we meet. I hope this may be ere long. I need not assure you how happy I always am to see you.

Your friend, Miss Lane, desires to be most kindly remembered to you. After passing the whole winter and spring at home, I am glad she has determined to visit the Bedford Springs about the middle of July. Whether I shall accompany her is uncertain. I believe it is natural for old men to be reluctant to leave home. At least, such is my feeling.

What an extraordinary speech Mr. Lincoln has made to the Union Leaguers at Philadelphia! They have promised with a shout to march to the front at his call and shed their blood, if need be, in the cause of their country. I have no doubt he will afford them the opportunity. Nobody believes they will embrace it. They will still, however, fight the Copperheads at home.

Your friend, as ever,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. J. B. BAKER.]

WHEATLAND, July 15th, 1864.

MY DEAR SIR:—

As the rebel raid is over, Miss Lane will leave for the Bedford Springs on Tuesday next, and will go to Huntingdon that evening. She would be very glad if Emily and yourself should accompany her. I desire to go, but have not yet determined.



When will the purchase money for the Pim property be payable? If at the present moment, it would not be convenient for me; but still I can borrow.

I learn that Doctor Carpenter and your uncle Newton are to visit you to-morrow. I do hope you will be able to arrange all affairs.

Your friend, as ever,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MISS LANE.]

WHEATLAND, August 5th, 1864.

MY DEAR MISS LANE:—

I arrived here this afternoon, baggage all safe, a few minutes after three o'clock. I never had so agreeable a ride on a railroad car. I would advise you, by all means, in returning home, to stay all night at Huntingdon and come by the cars on the next morning. I told Mr. Miller . . . , and I wish you to stay at his house. We parted from Mrs. Pegram, Miss Brent, and Mr. Jackson, at Harrisburg—a sorry parting.

I found all things in good order on my arrival. Mrs. Fahnstock is still here and so is Miss Harriet Parker.

Governor Curtin, as you will have perceived, has called for the services of 30,000 volunteers to defend the State against the rebels.

I scarcely know to what ladies to send my love at Bedford, but I wish you to deliver it especially to the ladies who gave me a parting kiss. The fragrance of their lips is as fresh as at the first moment. I hope you and Harriet will behave with all proper respect to your venerable aunt. Remember me most kindly to Mrs. Wade. I hope she will place you under proper restraint, a thing I have never been able to accomplish. Give my best love to Harriet.

I entertain no fears for you at the Springs. It is possible, however, that the rebels may succeed in cutting the railroad track between Huntingdon and Harrisburg, which would put you to some inconvenience on returning home; but be not alarmed.

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

P. S.—From a telegram sent by Mr. Scott to Altoona, it would seem he considers that place to be in danger.

[TO HIS NEPHEW, JAMES BUCHANAN.]

WHEATLAND, August 6th, 1864.

MY DEAR JAMES:—

I have received your favor of the 3d instant, and am truly rejoiced to learn that your prospects are so favorable in the oil region. Until I read your letter, I had supposed your brother Edward was a partner with you; but as you do not mention his name, I conclude this is not the case. . . .

I passed more than a fortnight very agreeably at the Springs. Miss Lane desired to remain until your father should go to Bedford. I am now sorry I did not bring her and Harriet Buchanan home with me, although

I do not consider them in any danger at the Springs. What I fear is that the railroad may be cut and travel interrupted somewhere between Huntingdon and Harrisburg. Newton Lightner is still at the Springs, and I hope they may return with him. The people of Lancaster are in great alarm and are about to remove their valuables. . . . .

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. LEIPER.]

WHEATLAND, August 23, 1864.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favor and it affords me great pleasure to learn that Mrs. Leiper and yourself propose to pay us a visit some time after the 1st September. The sooner the better. I need not promise both a cordial welcome. Please write a day or two before so that the carriage may meet you at the cars.

It did not occur to me that your former letter might have referred to that one which I wrote in favor of Forney's election to the Senate. If it had, I should have spared you some trouble.

Miss Lane returned from the Springs on Friday last and desires to be kindly remembered to Mrs. Leiper and yourself.

The address of Mr. Lincoln's "To whom it may concern," has given a great impulse to the reaction already commenced before its date. I have no doubt he is anxious to correct the blunder; but cannot believe, as the *New York Herald's* correspondent states, that he has employed Judge Black to visit Canada for this purpose.

Very affectionately, your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. CAPEN.]

WHEATLAND, August 25, 1864.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favors of the 1st and 17th insts., together with a copy of your letter to Mr. Van Dyke as Chairman, all of which I have read with much interest. The meeting of the Chicago Convention is so near at hand that it would be vain to enter into political speculations. The proceedings of this body, whatever they may be, will constitute a new and important era in the history of the Democratic party. From all appearances McClellan will be nominated. Whether for good or for evil time must determine. The platform will present the greatest difficulty. Whilst we are all in favor of peace, it may be too pacific. We ought to commence negotiations with the South and offer them every reasonable guarantee for the security of their rights *within the Union*. If they will accept this and engage to meet us in a

general convention of all the States, then I should be in favor of an armistice. A general proposition for peace, and an armistice without reference to the restoration of the Union, would be in fact a recognition of their independence. For this I confess I am far from being prepared.

It is my impression that the South have no idea of making peace without recognition. In this I trust I may be mistaken.

Your article on "swapping horses" is both witty and true, and has afforded us much amusement.

In regard to Miss Lane's coal lands: I think it would be impossible, scattered as the heirs are, and some of them needy, to obtain the consent of all to lease them. It is in the power of any one of them to force a sale by legal proceedings. This was threatened; but has not yet been attempted. In that event, which is highly probable, we ought to be prepared to purchase; and from the nature of law proceedings we shall have sufficient time to be ready. Your services and influence may then become very beneficial. . . . Miss Lane will write to you whenever anything shall occur respecting the lands.

I shall decide when and how I shall publish after seeing the proceedings at Chicago. I cannot think the work deserves to be stereotyped.

Miss Lane desires to be most kindly remembered to you.

My health is as usual. We passed our time very agreeably at the Springs.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[TO HIS NEPHEW, J. BUCHANAN HENRY.]

WHEATLAND, September 22, 1864.

MY DEAR JAMES:—

I was very much gratified with your last letter, as I always am to hear good tidings of yourself and your little boy. May God have you both under His holy keeping! I should have written to you more than ten days ago, but for an accident which has caused me much pain, and confined me to my room, and a great part of the time to bed, since last Sunday week. On that evening whilst taking a walk on the turnpike I fell with great force, and the concussion was so violent that on the next day I found myself unable to walk, and for several days I could not stand. I can now walk across the floor and my strength is gradually returning. In other respects I am well. The doctor thought that the severe fall might bring back the rheumatism; but it has not done so, except in a slight degree. . . .

No man except General McClellan could have been nominated at Chicago. The Convention was neither more nor less than a ratification meeting of the decree of the people. He would not have been my first choice; but I am satisfied. God grant he may succeed! Peace would be a great, a very great blessing; but it would be purchased at too high a price at the expense of the Union. I have never yet been able to tolerate the idea of Southern recognition.

Mr. Schell will, I think and earnestly hope, accept my invitation to pay us a visit during the present or next month. We should all be glad you would accompany him; but not at the expense of your important business. . . . Miss Hetty has made apple butter for you which, in the estimate of those who use such an article, is pronounced excellent. She says, however, that you never write to her as you did formerly.

Miss Harriet and Miss Hetty desire me to present their kindest love to you, and I remain

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. CAPEN.]

WHEATLAND, October 5, 1864.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have just received your favor of the 3d instant. Whilst I do not concur in opinion with our valued friend, Mr. Sparks, that there is no difference between the Chicago platform and General McClellan's letter of acceptance, I am cordially willing to give him my vote.

On retiring from the Presidential office, I expressed the determination to follow the example of my Democratic predecessors, and refrain from taking an active part in party politics. Still, I am as much of a Democrat, and as devoted to Democratic principles, as I ever have been. Peace, although a great blessing and greatly to be desired, would be too dearly purchased at the expense of the Union, and I, therefore, like the letter of General McClellan.

In answer to your inquiry, I am but slightly, if at all, acquainted with General McClellan. I must certainly have seen him, but have no recollection of his person.

As to the result of the election in this State, I can express no opinion. I hear, from those who visit me, of great changes everywhere in our favor; but it cannot be denied that, since the victories of Farragut, Sherman, and the prospects of General Grant, an impression has been made, more or less extensively, that the Southern States will speedily submit. I wish to God this were true. It is certain, however, that the expectation has gone far to embolden the Republicans. But why speculate? Tuesday next will decide the vote of Pennsylvania at the Presidential election, unless it should be very close.

My record is all ready, but I do not intend to publish until after the Presidential election. The truth which it contains would not make it a very acceptable document, especially to the friends of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, of Squatter Sovereignty, and of those Douglas supporters who broke up the Charleston Convention. It would not be very acceptable to ———, nor to ———, and that class of politicians.

Miss Lane desires to be most kindly remembered to you, and I remain always,

Very respectfully your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. LEIPER.]

WHEATLAND, October 26, 1864.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favor of the 18th instant, and regret to learn from it that Mrs. Leiper and yourself have abandoned the purpose of paying us a visit. I anticipated much pleasure from this visit. I now meet very few who can converse with me from their own knowledge of the distant past; and it is always a source of high gratification to meet an old friend like yourself, even older than I am, with whom I have ever been on terms of intimacy. We are both at a period of life when it is our duty to relax our grasp on a world fast receding, and fix our thoughts, desires and affections on one which knows no change. I trust in God that, through the merits and atonement of his Son, we may be both prepared for the inevitable change.

I am truly sorry to learn that you have not been very well. My own health is now good, except some rheumatic feeling in the legs.

I experience, with you, the desire to stay at home. This comes from old age, and is a merciful dispensation of Providence, repressing the desire to mingle much with the outside world when we are no longer capable of its enjoyments. Peace and tranquility suit us best.

Though feeling a deep interest in it, I speculate but little on the result of the approaching election. When I was behind the scenes I could generally predict the event; but not so now. I confess I was most agreeably surprised that we had carried the Congressional election on the home vote, and now indulge the hope that we may have a majority over the soldiers' vote and all on the 8th November. In this, however, I do not feel very great confidence.

Please to present my kind regards to Mrs. Leiper, and say how sorry I am not to have been able to welcome her at Wheatland. I should still insist on your promised visit, but Miss Lane left home yesterday, to stay I do not know how long.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. HASSARD.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, November 8, 1864.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favor of the 31st ultimo, inquiring whether there is any truth in the statement that President Polk, in 1846, had solicited Archbishop Hughes to accept a special mission to Mexico, and I regret that I cannot give this question a very definite answer. I shall cheerfully, however, state all my knowledge on the subject.

There were at this period many Catholic soldiers in the army of General Taylor on the Rio Grande; and I suggested to President Polk that it was our duty to provide them chaplains of their own Christian denomination. To this he cheerfully assented. In consequence, I addressed the letter, in May, 1846,

to which you refer, to Bishop Hughes (not then Archbishop), inviting him to come to Washington. He was then in Baltimore, attending the Provincial Council of Bishops. He immediately came to the State Department, accompanied by Bishop ———, of Dubuque.

When I communicated to Bishop Hughes the desire of the President to send Catholic chaplains to the army, and to obtain his advice and assistance to carry this into effect, both Bishops warmly approved the measure. They immediately proceeded to the Jesuits' College in Georgetown, to obtain the services of two suitable army chaplains. After a few hours they returned, evidently much gratified with their success, and informed me, in enthusiastic terms, that every professor in the College, both old and young, had volunteered to go to the army. The Bishops, however, came to the conclusion that it would be more expedient to select the chaplains from among the priests outside of the college, and accordingly Father McElroy and Father Rey, of the Jesuit Society, were appointed for this arduous and dangerous service. It is due to these pious and good men to say they faithfully and usefully performed their spiritual duties to the soldiers, and with much satisfaction to the administration. One of these, Father Rey, was afterwards murdered by brigands, near Monterey.

It occurred to the President, whilst the Bishop was in Washington, and most probably at an earlier period, that, should he consent to visit Mexico, he might render essential services in removing the violent prejudices of the Mexicans, and especially of their influential clergy, which then prevailed against the United States, and thus prepare the way for peace between the two Republics. In this I heartily concurred. Independently of his exalted character as a dignitary of the church, I believed him to be one of the ablest and most accomplished and energetic men I had ever known, and that he possessed all the prudence and firmness necessary to render such a mission successful.

The President and the Bishop had several conversations on this subject; but at none of these was I present. I have not the least doubt, however, from what I heard the President say, that this mission was offered to him, and that he declined it.

The President, much as he desired to avail himself of the Bishop's services, could not at the time offer him anything more acceptable. He could not appoint a new envoy to the Mexican Government so soon after they had refused, in an insulting manner, to receive our former minister. Paredes was, at that time, the Revolutionary President of Mexico. He owed his elevation to his extreme and violent hostility to the Government and people of the United States. Besides, his army had just commenced the war by crossing the Rio Grande and attacking a detachment of our troops.

Yours very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO DR. BLAKE.]

WHEATLAND, November 21, 1864.

MY DEAR SIR:—

From your last letter I incline to believe that you bear our defeat with Christian fortitude. Your preceding letter was written with such glowing confidence and joyful hope, that Miss Lane and myself had some amusement over it, as we had no expectation of General McClellan's election from the beginning, most ardently as we desired it. If one seriously asks himself the question, in what condition would the Democratic party be, with all the terrible difficulties and embarrassments surrounding it, had it been successful, he will find grounds for consolation in defeat. It has shown its strength and has performed its duty, and can well afford to bide its time. Meanwhile, it will be a watchful guardian over the Constitution.

Now would be the time for conciliation on the part of Mr. Lincoln. A frank and manly offer to the Confederates, that they might return to the Union just as they were before they left it, leaving the slavery question to settle itself, might possibly be accepted. Should they return, he would have the glory of accomplishing the object of the war against the most formidable rebellion which has ever existed. He ought to desire nothing more.

In that event, the exasperated feelings of mutual hate would soon subside. If the parties would not love each other, they must entertain greater mutual respect for one another than ever existed before. There would be no new collision between them for a hundred years. The Republicans in this part of the world are not exultant. They have won the elephant, and they will find difficulty in deciding what to do with him.

I feel some pity for Stanton, on his sick bed. I have no doubt of his personal integrity, and that his acceptance of the Department has been a great pecuniary loss to him. He has served Lincoln faithfully, if not very ably or discreetly, and yet the Republicans themselves do not speak well of him. . . . .

I rarely see and but seldom hear of Judge Black. I presume he must now be in Washington. He must be getting very rich.

I very seldom hear from Mr. Toucey. He is a gentleman of the old school, full of principle and honor.

I have not the least feeling against our good friend Flinn on account of *that resolution*, but esteem him as highly as ever. I am convinced he had no part in it. It was altogether à la Florence.

Miss Lane has been at her uncle Edward's for several weeks, and will not be home till the beginning of December, and then Buchanan Henry will accompany her. In the meantime, Miss Annie Buchanan, a very intelligent and agreeable girl, is staying with me. She, as well as Miss Hetty, desires to be kindly remembered. We all wish you would spend the Christmas holidays with us.

Remember me kindly to Doctor Jones and Mr. Carlisle. Had the latter

accepted the position in the cabinet which I offered, I should have had one ex-member of it, both able and willing to render me valuable assistance, and this he could have done with very little loss of hours.

Your letters are always highly acceptable, and I shall ever remain, most sincerely,

Your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. CAPEN.]

WHEATLAND, December 28, 1864.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favor of Christmas day, and cordially return you my best wishes for your health, prosperity and happiness. I agree in opinion with General McClellan, that it is fortunate both for himself and the Democratic party that he was not elected. But I consider the defeat of Governor Seymour as most unfortunate. But doctors will differ.

Miss Lane received your favor respecting the coal lands in Philadelphia, but she is now at home. These consist of about 2,300 acres, situate in Broad Top Township, Bedford County, near the railroad connecting the Pennsylvania Railroad at Huntingdon, with the mines. This road is in full operation, and over it there is now conveyed large quantities of excellent coal to market. I have no doubt of the great value of these lands, though they have not been further explored than to ascertain there is abundance of coal in them. Miss Lane's interest in them is about one-eleventh, and she is entirely opposed to their sale, but I have no doubt this will be forced by some of her co-heirs. As yet she has received no notice of the institution of proceedings for this purpose, but is expecting it daily. The parties to whom you refer ought to examine the lands, for there is not a doubt they will be sold in the spring.

Miss Lane desires to be kindly remembered to you.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

P. S.—My health has been good for several months.



## CHAPTER XXIX.

1865—1868.

MARRIAGE OF MISS LANE—LETTERS TO HER AND OTHER PERSONS.

IN the year 1866, Mr. Buchanan had the happiness of seeing his niece, Miss Lane, married to Mr. Henry E. Johnston, of Baltimore. It seems that this engagement was first made known to him in October, 1865, when Miss Lane was absent from Wheatland. He writes to her as follows :

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MISS LANE.]

WHEATLAND, October 21, 1865.\*

MY DEAR HARRIET :—

I received yours of the 18th yesterday. We will talk the matter over in regard to Wheatland after your return. I believe you say truly that nothing would have induced you to leave me, in good or evil fortune, if I had wished you to remain with me. Such a wish on my part would be very selfish. You have long known my desire that you should marry, whenever a suitor worthy of you, and possessing your affections, should offer. Indeed it has been my strong desire to see you settled in the world before my death. You have now made your own unbiassed choice ; and from the character of Mr. Johnston I anticipate for you a happy marriage, because I believe, from your own good sense, you will conform to your conductor, and make him a good and loving

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\* It seems from the following letter from Dr. Blake to Mr. Buchanan, that Miss Lane was in Washington in October, 1865, at the second inauguration of President Lincoln.

[DR. BLAKE TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

HIS EXCELLENCY, JAMES BUCHANAN :—

MY DEAR SIR :—Your favor of the 21st inst. did not reach me until the 23d. On the following day I saw Miss Lane, and had the same pleasure yesterday. I expect to call on her to-morrow in company with some ladies who wish to pay their respects to her on your and her own accounts. She will not require any attention from me, as her reception hours are occupied by the many friends and admirers who visit her. At Mrs. Lincoln's afternoon reception she was the observed of all observers, and she was constantly surrounded by crowds of acquaintances, and persons desirous of being introduced to her. She, I am sure, must be highly gratified by her visit, as nothing has occurred to mar the pleasure of it.

Our city is full of strangers, who have been attracted among us by the approaching inauguration. There is nothing new, and I have nothing of local interest to communicate at this time.

Very truly your friend,

JOHN B. BLAKE.

wife. Beware of unreasonable delays in the performance of the ceremony, lest these may be attributed to an improper motive.

I have no news to communicate of the least importance; besides, I hope to see you by the middle of the next week at the latest.

Blanche and Martha paid me a brief visit yesterday,—better late than never, and so I told them.

Governor Porter was here two days during the present week. He and I began political life nearly together, and we can talk over the men and measures of the “auld lang syne” for the last fifty years. His visits are always agreeable to me.

Among your numerous friends you ask only for Punch,\* and this in the postscript, which is said to contain the essence of a lady's letter. He is a companion which I shun as much as possible, not being at all to my liking. I believe, however, his health is in a satisfactory condition.

The proceedings of a majority of the Episcopal Convention have afforded me great satisfaction.

If the opportunity should offer, please to remember me with great kindness and respect to Bishop Hopkins. I have no doubt his preaching extempore is excellent.

Give my love to Mrs. Reigart, and be sure you place an indelible mark on *that* stocking. Should I again get the gout, how it will solace the pain.

Miss Hetty desires to be kindly remembered to Maria and yourself. With my love to Maria, I remain,

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MISS LANE.]

WHEATLAND, November 30, 1865.

MY DEAR HARRIET:—

I enclose two letters. That from Mr. Capen I opened, supposing it might require immediate attention; but when I discovered the subject of it I ceased to read. I go to town to-day, and shall keep this open, so that if other letters should arrive I will enclose them.

I go to York on Saturday, having received a very kind and pressing invitation from the Shunks. Rebecca was ill in bed, and that is the reason why I had not heard from them. I have not a word from either Mr. Schell or James Henry. I infer there is nothing encouraging to write about the book. A strong attempt is making to cry it down in New York, but it will make its own way. No news.

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

Miss Lane's marriage took place at Wheatland on the 11th of January, 1866. The note of invitation to one of their

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\* A favorite dog.

most valued friends was written on the same day on which he received from Mr. Johnston a deed of settlement which that gentleman made in favor of his intended wife.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO COLONEL J. B. BAKER.]

WHEATLAND, January 6, 1866.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Miss Lane requests me to invite you in her name to her wedding on Thursday, the 11th inst. The ceremony will be between 12 and 1 o'clock. It is to be a private affair. No cards of invitation have been issued. I hope you will not fail to countenance us with your presence.

Your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. JOHNSTON.]

WHEATLAND, January 6, 1866.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favor of the 4th, with the deed, which I think has been well and carefully prepared. For this purely voluntary act of your kindness Miss Lane feels herself greatly indebted, and you will please to accept my cordial acknowledgments.

Had I been consulted, I should have preferred that my name had not appeared as a trustee, having determined, at my advanced age, to relieve myself, as far as possible, from all worldly affairs; but, as the chief burden will rest upon your brother Josiah, who is abundantly competent to perform the duty, I shall cheerfully accept the trust. Besides, this will place upon record, for whatever it may be worth, my entire approbation of the marriage.

With sentiments of warm regard, I remain,

Very respectfully your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. LEIPER.]

WHEATLAND, February 24, 1865.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favor of the 21st instant, and rejoice to learn that your health has so much improved. I trust that the genial air of the spring and the active exercise to which you have been all your life accustomed, may restore you once more to perfect health. Thank God! my own health has been good thus far throughout the severe and inclement weather.

I duly received your letter of the 17th January, and have been under the impression it was answered. I have often since thought of the description which you gave of your happy Christmas meeting with your children and grandchildren under the old paternal roof, and what heartfelt satisfaction it

must have afforded to Mrs. Leiper and yourself. I trust that several more such family reunions may be in reserve for you, though we have both attained an age when we cannot expect much time in this world, and when we ought to be preparing to meet our God in peace.

I had not learned, until the receipt of your last, that Mr. Lincoln had joined the Church. Let us hope, in Christian charity, that the act was done in sincerity. The old Presbyterian Church is not now what it was in former years. The last general assembly has thoroughly abolitionized it.

I confess I was much gratified at the capture of Charleston. This city was the nest of all our troubles. For more than a quarter of a century the people were disunionists, and during this whole period have been persistently engaged in inoculating the other slave States with their virus. Alas, for poor Virginia! who has suffered so much, and who was so reluctantly dragged into their support.

Miss Lane is now on a visit to Mrs. Berghman's (the daughter of Charles Macalester), in Washington city.

From your friend always,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. FLINN.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, April 18, 1865.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I was much astonished to learn from yours of the 17th that you had not received the bond and mortgage. At least ten days before the 1st of April, I enclosed the bond and mortgage to you, with a regular power of attorney, duly stamped and acknowledged, authorizing the recorder of deeds from Alleghany county to enter satisfaction on the record. My letter inclosing these papers was placed in the post office at Lancaster on the day after its date by a friend who happened to be at Wheatland, and the postage was paid. What can have become of it, I cannot conjecture. It must have gone astray, as many letters do. Should it not soon turn up, I shall send another power to enter satisfaction. Not knowing the name of the recorder, I gave the power to him by his official title, which is sufficient. Should it prove to be necessary to have a new power, please to state his name.

I thank you for the information relative to the assassination of President Lincoln, though I had received the news of this deplorable event before it came to hand. The ways of Divine Providence are inscrutable; and it is the duty of poor, frail man, whether he will or not, to submit to His mysterious dispensations. The war—the necessary war—forced upon us by the madness of the rebels, we all fondly hoped was drawing to a triumphant conclusion in the restoration of the Union with a return to friendly relations among all the States, under the auspices of Mr. Lincoln. At such a moment the terrible crime was committed, which hurried him into eternity, and God only knows

what may be the direful consequences. I deeply mourn his loss, from private feelings, but still more deeply for the sake of the country. Heaven, I trust, will not suffer the perpetrators of the deed, and all their guilty accomplices, to escape just punishment. But we must not despair of the Republic.

I have known President Johnson for many years. Indeed, he once honored me with a visit at Wheatland. That he has risen from an humble station to the highest political position of the Union, is evidence both of his ability and his merits. He is (certainly he used to be) a man of sound judgment, excellent common sense, and devoted to the elevation and welfare of the people. I wish him success, with all my heart, in performing the arduous and responsible duties which have been cast upon him. I shall judge him fairly, as I ever did his lamented predecessor, though my opinions may be of but little importance. I hope he may exercise his own good judgment, first weighing the counsels of his advisers carefully, as was ever the practice of the first and greatest of our Presidents, before the adoption of any decided resolution. The feelings naturally springing from the horrid deed ought first to have a few days to subside, before a final committal of the administration to any fixed policy.

I have weighed your suggestion with care, but regret to say I cannot agree with you. Such an act would be misrepresented.\*

With my kind regards to Mrs. Flinn, I remain always your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO THE HON. J. W. WALL.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, April 27, 1865.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Upon a reperusal of your letter of the 30th ultimo, I consider it my duty to furnish a specific denial of the statement, by whomsoever made, that I refused you the mission to Rome, "because of a doubt as to the genuineness of your Democracy." Any such statement is without the least foundation. Indeed, according to my best recollection, those who professed to be the best friends both of yourself and of Mr. Stockton, never intimated a suspicion either of your Democracy or your ability. On the contrary, they expressed much anxiety that you should be the Democratic candidate for Congress in your district.

Permit me to observe, as your father's friend, and as your own (if you will allow me so to be), that I regretted very much the tone and manner in which you say that "the Republicans will sweep the State of New Jersey next fall." You ought to recollect that the life of a public man under this, and indeed under all popular governments, is exposed to many vicissitudes. For this, whilst ever keeping steadily in view a sacred regard for principle, he

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\* His correspondent had urged him to "write a few lines on the death of Mr. Lincoln, which will soothe the bitter prejudices of the extremists of his party against you and your friends."

ought to be prepared. His true policy is to "bide his time," and if injustice has been done him, it is morally certain that the people will, in the long run, repair it. Indeed, this very injustice, if borne with discreet moderation and firmness, often proves the cause of his eventual benefit. Do not mar your future prospects by hasty actions or expressions which may be employed to your injury. Still believe "there is a better day coming," and prepare the way for it.

I was seventy-four on Sunday last, and, considering my advanced age, I enjoy good health as well as a buoyant spirit.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. KING.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, April 27, 1865.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Rest assured that I was much gratified to receive your favor of the 22d. If I was indebted a letter to you, I am sorry for it, because I entertain no other feeling towards you but that of kindness and friendship.

In common with you, I feel the assassination of President Lincoln to be a terrible misfortune to our country. May God, in his mercy, ward from us the evils which it portends, and bring good out of this fearful calamity. My intercourse with our deceased President, both on his visit to me, after his arrival in Washington, and on the day of his first inauguration, convinced me that he was a man of a kindly and benevolent heart, and of plain, sincere and frank manners. I have never since changed my opinion of his character. Indeed, I felt for him much personal regard. Throughout the years of the war, I never faltered in my conviction that it would eventually terminate in the crushing of the rebellion, and was ever opposed to the recognition of the Confederate government by any act which even looked in that direction. Believing, always, secession to be a palpable violation of the Constitution, I considered the acts of secession to be absolutely void; and that the States were, therefore, still members, though rebellious members, of the Union. . . . .

Yours very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO REV. P. COOMBE.]

WASHINGTON, May 2, 1865.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favor of the 29th ultimo, proposing that I should endow a Professorship in Dickinson College for the education of poor students who do not possess the means of educating themselves. The object is highly praiseworthy, but I regret to say I do not feel myself at liberty to advance \$25,000 for this purpose. Under existing circumstances my charities, includ-

ing those to relatives who require assistance, are extensive, and the world is greatly mistaken as to the amount of my fortune. Besides, if I should hereafter conclude to endow a Professorship, whilst I highly approve the theological doctrines of the Methodist Episcopal Church, I could not prefer a college under its direction to a college of the Presbyterian Church, in which I was born and educated, or to the German Reformed College, in my immediate vicinity, in which I have taken a deep interest ever since its origin at Mercersburg, near the place of my nativity.

I might add that Dickinson College, when I was a student, was not conducted in such a manner as to inspire me with any high degree of gratitude for the education I received from my "*Alma Mater*." This was after the death of Dr. Nesbit and before a new President had been elected. I am truly happy to believe that it is now well and ably conducted under the auspices of a Christian Church founded by John Wesley, whose character I have ever held in highest veneration, and whose sermons I have read over and over again with great interest.

Yours very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, May 11, 1865.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK EVENING POST.]

SIR:—

In the New York *Tribune* of yesterday I read, with no little surprise, an extract from the *Evening Post* (which I do not see), stating in substance that the Cincinnati Democratic convention of June, 1856 (not "May"), had come to "a dead lock" on the evening before Mr. Buchanan's nomination, and had adjourned until the next morning, with a fair prospect that it would meet only to adjourn *sine die*; but that in the meantime, arrangements were made to secure his nomination as soon as the convention should reassemble, in consequence of pledges given by his friends. The nature of these pledges, according to the article in the *Post*, was openly avowed by Judge Black on the floor of the convention immediately after nomination had been made. According to it: "A silence ensued for a few moments, as if the convention was anticipating something prepared, when Judge Black, of Pennsylvania (afterwards Attorney General under Buchanan), rose in his place and made a set speech, in which he proceeded to denounce 'Abolitionism' and 'Black Republicanism' very freely, and to argue that the States possessed, under the Constitution, the right of secession. He went further, and told the convention that if the nominee was elected, and a Black Republican should be elected as his successor, he [Mr. Buchanan] would do nothing to interfere with the exercise of it. This pledge was ample, and was accepted by the Southern leaders."

You will doubtless be astonished to learn that Judge Black, afterwards Mr. Buchanan's Attorney General, by whom this pledge is alleged to have been made, and through whom the evident purpose now is to fasten it upon Mr. Buchanan, was not a delegate to the Cincinnati convention, nor was he within five hundred miles of Cincinnati during its session. Instead of this, he was at

*the very time performing his high official duties as a Judge of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.*

It may be added, that from the date of General Jackson's message of January, 1833, against South Carolina nullification and secession, until that of his own message of December, 1860, and indeed since, no public man has more steadfastly and uniformly opposed these dangerous and suicidal heresies than Mr. Buchanan. Had any person, in or out of the convention, dared to make a pledge in his behalf on this or any other subject, such an act would have been condemned a few days thereafter by the terms of his letter accepting the nomination. In this, after expressing his thanks for the honor conferred, he says that: "Deeply sensible of the vast and varied responsibility attached to the station, especially at the present crisis in our affairs, *I have carefully refrained from seeking the nomination, either by word or deed;*" and this statement is emphatically true.

A few words in regard to the alleged "dead lock" in the Cincinnati convention, at the time of its adjournment on the evening of the 5th June, after fourteen ballots had been taken for a candidate. It appears from its proceedings, as officially published, that on each of these ballotings Mr. Buchanan received a plurality, and on the sixth, attained a majority of all the votes of the convention, but not the required two-thirds. On the fourteenth and last ballot on that evening, the vote stood 152½ for Mr. Buchanan, 75 for Pierce, 63 for Douglas, and 5½ for Cass. This being the state of the case, when the convention assembled the next morning the New Hampshire delegation withdrew the name of General Pierce, and the Illinois delegation withdrew that of Judge Douglas, in obedience to instructions from him by telegraph, on the day before the ballotings had commenced. After this, the nomination of Mr. Buchanan seemed to be a matter of course. He had never heard of "a dead lock" in the convention, or anything like it, until he read the article in the *Post*.

It may be proper to state that Colonel Samuel W. Black, of Pittsburg, was a delegate to the Cincinnati convention from Pennsylvania, and being well known as a ready and eloquent speaker, "shouts were raised" in the convention for a speech from him immediately after the nomination was announced. To these he briefly responded in an able and enthusiastic manner. From the identity of their surnames, had this response, reported with the proceedings, contained the infamous pledge attributed to Judge Black, or anything like it, we might in charity have inferred that the author of the article had merely mistaken the one name for the other. But there is nothing in what Colonel Black said which affords the least color for any such mistake.

Colonel Black afterwards sealed his hostility to secession with his blood. At an early stage of the war, he fell mortally wounded on the field of battle, whilst gallantly leading on his regiment against the rebels.

I doubt not you will cheerfully do me justice by publishing this letter, and I would thank you for a copy of the paper.

Yours very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.



[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. NAHUM CAPEN.]

WHEATLAND, May 13, 1865.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your note of the 11th, with the slip from the Boston paper not named. The astounding answer to it is, that Judge Black was not a delegate to the Cincinnati Convention, was not within five hundred miles of Cincinnati during its session, but was at the time performing his duties on the Bench, as Judge of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. Although convinced that he was not present, in order to make assurance doubly sure, I sent him a telegram on the subject. His answer is as follows: "I was *not* at Cincinnati in 1856, or at any other time in my life. I was not a member of, or an attendant upon the Democratic Convention." This is a clincher.

When I saw the article from the New York *Evening Post* in the New York *Tribune*, I addressed a letter to the editor, and fearing he might be unwilling to publish such a damning condemnation of his article, *a la mode* ——— of Boston, I sent a duplicate to the *Tribune*.

I forwarded your note with the enclosure to Judge Black, but, like Gallio, he cares for none of these matters.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[TO HORACE GREELEY, ESQ., EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK "TRIBUNE."]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, May 23, 1865.

SIR:—

In courtesy I ought to thank you, as I do sincerely, for your offered use of the *Tribune* for "any explanation, comment or disclaimer" of the acts of my administration during the last six months of its existence. This kind offer should be cordially accepted, but, admonished by advancing years, of which you give me warning, I some time since compiled a history of it during this period, chiefly from the proceedings of Congress and other official and reliable documents, too long for publication in the *Tribune*. This has not been published hitherto, because of my reluctance, for several reasons, to obtrude myself upon public attention during the prosecution of the war, now happily terminated, in the suppression of the rebellion.

Though we have been "life-long" political opponents, as you truly observe, I have for many years been a constant reader of the *Tribune*. This I have done to obtain a knowledge of the principles and policy of the Republican party, from their ablest and most influential expounder; and one who, whilst contending against political opponents, has had the courage and candor to present to the public the Democratic propositions and principles he assailed. I would, therefore, put it to yourself, whether it was quite compatible with this character to assume that my contradiction of an article in another journal, relating to matters of fact, dating as far back as the Cincinnati

Convention of June, 1856, had been intended as a defence of the acts of an administration which did not come into existence until nine months afterward; and thereupon to pronounce the conclusion "that Mr. Buchanan's letter has not vindicated Mr. Buchanan's career." Mr. Buchanan has carefully refrained, for four long years, from any attempt to vindicate his "career" as President, except so far as this was forced upon him in his controversy with General Scott, and this course he shall still continue to pursue, until the publication of his historical sketch.

Indeed, his recent letter to the editor of the *New York Post* would never have been written had the editor republished from his files the old article, as published nearly nine years before (though never known to Mr. B. until a few days ago), with any comments he might have thought proper. That of which Mr. Buchanan now complains is that the new article, though ostensibly based upon the old, presents a statement of facts essentially different, in a most important particular, from the original; and this, too, with the evident object of injuring his character. This change consists in substituting for the name of Colonel Black, who *was* a delegate to the Cincinnati Convention, that of Judge Black, who *was not*; and, at the same time, referring to the fact that "the Judge was afterward Attorney General under Mr. Buchanan." Whence this radical change, if not to bring home to Mr. Buchanan a complicity in the infamous pledge which the last article falsely, but in express terms, attributes to Judge Black? Had the facts stated in this article, on the authority of the editor of the *Post*, remained without contradiction, they would have been taken for granted by the public, to the lasting and serious injury to the reputation both of Judge Black and Mr. Buchanan.

It is but justice to the reputation of a brave and lamented officer to repeat that, in his ardent and impassioned remarks before the convention, evidently without previous preparation, there is not the least color for attributing to Colonel Black a pledge which would have been a serious imputation upon the fair fame of a man who was without fear and without reproach.

Yours very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[SECRETARY STANTON TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON CITY, June 16, 1865.

DEAR SIR:—

Your note of the 14th inst., enclosing Mr. Tate's letter, has just reached me, and I have ordered the immediate release of Lieutenant Tate and his three friends, with transportation from Johnson's Island to Alabama. I hope that you are in the enjoyment of good health, and beg you to present my compliments to Miss Lane.

Yours truly,

EDWIN M. STANTON.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO A FRIEND.]

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received yours of the 10th instant, and annex a receipt. I had not thought of charging interest.

Should you need one or two thousand dollars in the fall, I shall be happy to accommodate you. Please to give me notice as long in advance as may be convenient.

My health is as usual.

I begin to doubt seriously whether President Johnson will do, but still hope for the best.

Your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. LEIPER.]

WHEATLAND, June 19, 1865.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I was glad to perceive, from the *Jeffersonian*, that you were well enough to preside and to speak at your late Democratic county meeting. From the tenor of your last letter, I was fearful you would not be able to perform this duty. I am truly thankful that I was mistaken. Our thread of life is already so long that the Fates cannot have much of it in reserve. May God grant that we shall both be ready to welcome our Saviour at His coming, whensoever He may arrive.

Thank Heaven! we have lived to witness the return of peace. I do not pretend to speculate on the future course of President Johnson. Of the past there can be no doubt. Until the close of my administration, no man had a better Democratic record, unless we may except his effort to give away the public lands to actual settlers. With this exception, I received his uniform support.

My health is wonderfully good, considering my age. It has been so for the last six months, but I make no calculation for the future.

I am happy to perceive that you are living over your life in your grandchildren. This is a source of enjoyment which I do not possess, yet I congratulate you upon it with all my heart. May they all be as prosperous and happy as your heart can desire!

Miss Lane desires me to present her affectionate regards to you.

From your friend, as ever,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. TOUCEY.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, August 3, 1865.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favor of the 29th ultimo, with the accompanying communication. It is too late to make use of them in my book, the manu-

script of which is now in the hands of the Appletons, and I am from week to week receiving the proofs, but not in such quantities as I could desire. They publish it at their own risk, and are stereotyping it. From present appearances, it will not be published for a month or six weeks. Still, when I wrote it, your testimony before the committee was in my possession, and I think you will say I have made good use of it.

I have heard that the legislature of Connecticut have restored your portrait, and that of Governor Seymour, to their appropriate places among the Governors. Is this true? It was a shameful act to have removed them.

Judge Black was here a few days ago. He informs me that Mr. and Mrs. [Jacob] Thompson left Halifax for France on the steamer some weeks ago, and that the money deposited by him in Canada belonged to himself. It is well for him he has made his escape. . . . .

My health is very good, considering my age. I lead a tranquil and contented life, free from self-reproach for any of the acts of my administration. How much I wish to see Mrs. Toucey and yourself! Miss Lane desires to be most kindly remembered to both. Please to present my warmest regards to her, and remember me kindly to Governor Seymour.

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. TOUCEY TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

HARTFORD, September 18, 1865.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your letter inquiring who persuaded General Scott to take the "Star of the West" instead of the "Brooklyn," to send reinforcements and provisions to Fort Sumter in 1861. I am not able to answer the question, except by saying that I did not. Who did persuade him to make the change is entirely unknown to me. I always supposed that he was induced to send the "Star of the West" by advisers outside of the administration. Of course I cannot answer for Mr. Holt, but I never suspected that he was the author of that measure.

If you can do it without any inconvenience, I should be glad to receive from you a copy of the joint order of Mr. Holt and myself to the Military and Naval Forces at Pensacola, which we issued during the session of the Peace Convention. You may remember that I applied for a copy to Mr. Welles, and he declined to give it. I may have occasion to make some use of it.

Mrs. Toucey unites with me in most respectful and kindest regards to yourself and Miss Lane.

Very truly yours, with the highest respect,

ISAAC TOUCEY.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO THE HON. C. J. FAULKNER.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, October 21, 1865.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have this moment received your favor of the 19th inst. Whilst attributing to me patriotic motives for my official acts when President, you express the opinion that I had erred in some of my recommendations and measures of policy. To this, as a reasonable man, I can have no objection, for I may have committed many errors. But when you add that I would probably myself admit such to be the fact, I must say that you are mistaken. I pursued a settled consistent line of policy from the beginning to the end, and, on reviewing my past conduct, I do not recollect a single important measure which I should desire to recall, even if this were in my power. Under this conviction I have enjoyed a tranquil and cheerful mind, notwithstanding the abuse I have received, in full confidence that my countrymen would eventually do justice. I am happy to know that you still continue to be my friend, and I cordially reciprocate your kindly sentiments, wishing that you may long live in health and prosperity.

I thank you for the slip from the *National Intelligencer*, which I have no doubt contains a correct representation of your conduct whilst Minister in France. I learned from Mr. Magraw the cause of your arrest soon after you had been discharged. I am happy to say that through God's mercy I enjoy unusual health for a man now in his seventy-fifth year.

Miss Lane is not at home or she would certainly return you her kind remembrances.

Very respectfully your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MANTON MARBLE.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, November 4, 1865.

DEAR SIR:—

I have received, through your favor of the 29th ultimo, the invitation of the Managing Committee to become an honorary member of the Manhattan Club, and I cheerfully and gratefully accept this token of their regard.

It is proper I should thank the Committee for their kind recognition of my long services in the cause of Democracy. Convinced that its principles spring from the very essence of the Constitution, I know they can never die whilst this shall survive. All that is required to render them again triumphant, as they were in the days of Jefferson and Jackson, is that the party, without concealment or reserve, shall, as then, with unity of spirit, persistently present and uphold them before the American people in their native truth, simplicity and grandeur. I am too old to take part in this glorious task, but, were I twenty years younger, I should once more devote myself to its accomplishment, firmly believing that this would be the triumph of law, liberty and order, and would best secure every interest—material, social and political—of all classes of my countrymen.

Yours very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. CAPEN.]

WHEATLAND, November 25, 1865.

MY DEAR SIR:—

You will have seen ere this that my little book has been launched on a stormy ocean. I thank God that I have lived to perform this duty. It will be severely criticised, but the facts and authorities cited cannot be demolished.

Miss Lane desires to be most kindly remembered to you.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[REV. DR. NEVIN TO MR. BUCHANAN.]

November 30, 1865

MY DEAR SIR:—

Please accept my sincere thanks for the copy of your new work just placed in my hands. I shall hold it in high value for what I conceive to be its intrinsic historical importance, and also as a cherished monument of your personal friendship and favor. It gives me pleasure to find that it is in the way of gaining wide attention in the country, and I look upon it as a significant tribute to its power that so little effort has been made thus far (so far as I know), in quarters where it might have been expected, to meet it in the way of earnest controversy and contradiction. For the case is not one in which people of sense can persuade themselves that the argument is to be disposed of finally, either by blind general abuse, or by any affectation of silent indifference and contempt. That your last days may be your best days, and that they may be followed by a brighter happiness in heaven, is the prayer of

Your affectionate friend,

J. W. NEVIN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. BAKER.]

WHEATLAND, December 25, 1865.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your kind favor of the 21st, and also the grand Christmas turkey, of which I entertain the warmest anticipations. Although we Presbyterians make no fuss over Christmas, yet we do not altogether despise the good things which it brings in its train as kept by the outside barbarians....

I heartily rejoice with you that you have completed the barn.

With my warmest wishes that you and yours may enjoy many a merry Christmas and many a happy New Year, I remain as ever your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO A FRIEND.]

WHEATLAND, December 30, 1865.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favor of yesterday, and cannot consent that you shall be put to any inconvenience, or be obliged to sell your railroad shares at so low a price for the want of \$1,000. I shall, therefore, send you a check for that amount on the 2d January, and send a check to our friend for \$800, with a positive promise to send him the remaining \$1,000 on the 1st February.

I shall be very happy to see Mr. Phillips and yourself on any day next week; but on the week following a great event is to take place, at which, I hope, you may be present, though it will be almost strictly private. If Mr. Phillips cannot come on the week commencing on New Year's day, then we must postpone his visit until the week commencing on the 15th January.

Your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

P. S.—I send a pair of canvas-backs.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. FLINN.]

(Without date.)

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received the book, and am indebted to you for having procured it for me.

I am glad to learn that you soon propose to write me a longer letter.

The rebels, when at Wrightsville, were within eleven miles of us. No Democrat, within my knowledge was, in the least degree, alarmed for his personal safety. Not one of my personal or political friends, male or female, thought of leaving Lancaster. Miss Lane entertained no fears. I doubt not, however, that they have made sad havoc among the horses of my tenant in Franklin county. I trust that General Lee may speedily be driven across the Potomac. He would never have been here had not —— been such a poor devil.

Your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MRS. JOHNSTON.]

WHEATLAND, January 18, 1866.

MY DEAR MRS. JOHNSTON:—

I have received your kind letter, but not until Tuesday, when I thought it uncertain whether an answer would reach you at Boston.

I am much gratified with its tone, and think you have embarked on the sea of matrimony with a fair prospect that the voyage may be happy. This will, in a great measure, as I have often told you, depend upon yourself. I

hope you may perform your domestic duties with as much dignity and propriety as you have manifested in your *quasi* public life. I long to see you an affectionate wife and an exemplary matron. You are now . . . and have experienced enough of the life of the world to conclude that most of it is vanity and vexation of spirit. I trust you have heart and sense enough to be happy in your new condition. You will find it far better, to a well-balanced mind, than the flash and excitement produced by the admiration and flattery of the world. I expect great things from you, and trust I may not be disappointed.

The girls are still here, and render themselves quite agreeable.

I think the wedding went off properly and prosperously. Every guest was pleased. I almost lost my heart to Emily and Bessy. I liked them very much, and I think your association with them will prove highly agreeable. I have but little news to communicate. The Misses Steenman and Mr. and Mrs. Brinton have been here since you left, making anxious inquiries concerning you, which I was able to answer in a manner highly pleasing to myself. Mr. and Mrs. Swarr are about to attend the funeral of Mr. Mellon, their relative, in Philadelphia.

I am rejoiced that Mr. Johnston and Mr. Schell get along so well together. There is not now, and never has been, any reason why they should not. Mr. Schell is certainly one of the excellent of the earth, and there is no man living whom I esteem more highly.

I return you Sir Henry Holland's letter, and I am almost tempted to send him a copy of my book, on your account, as he desires. Still, my opinion of his conduct, on his last visit to the United States, has not changed. Perhaps it was too much to expect from a London Doctor, that he would forego the honor of reviewing the army of the Potomac, or the society of Thurlow Weed, Miss Rebecca Smith and Mr. Everett, for the sake of visiting an old man at Wheatland, who was proscribed by the grand dignitaries of the empire.

We have good sleighing here, and have been enjoying it moderately.

With my kindest regards to Mr. Johnston, I remain,

Yours ever affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO DR. BLAKE.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, January 19, 1866.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favor of the 16th instant, and am happy to learn that no "fair one" has come athwart your regard for your old friends. I know that your heart is so expanded, that love and friendship will both find suitable quarters in it.

I shall deliver your very kind message to Mrs. Johnston, but do not expect to see her for a considerable time. She left here with Mr. Johnston on the day of the wedding, and is now, I believe, in New York. When they will go to Baltimore I do not know, but believe that soon after they intend to visit



Cuba. I know that Mrs. Johnston would be delighted to receive your felicitations under your own hand. Her address will be Mrs. Henry E. Johnston, No. 79 Monument Street, Baltimore. I thank you for the offer to send me Mr. De Leon's review, but I do not wish to have it. If there is anything disagreeable in it, *as is doubtless the case*, some person will be sure to send it to me. There is a violent and brutal attack on the book and on me in Beecher's *Independent*, and I know not the number of extracts from the paper containing it, which I have received anonymously. The book is quietly making its own way, under the disadvantage of a very high price. Several thousands have been already sold, and the Appletons inform me the demand is still increasing.

I am truly happy to learn that my good old friend Dr. Jones is so well pleased with the book. Please to present him my very kindest regards.

Thank you for delivering my message to Mrs. Clay. She is charming, and has behaved beautifully in her trying situation.

When the opportunity offers, please to return my very kindest regards to Mrs. Dr. Houston. She is, indeed, an excellent woman, and I owe her many obligations.

I ought to thank you for the reports "of the condition of the *National Metropolitan Bank*." In these I observe you have blended specie with other lawful money, but the amount of each you have not designated. These reports have led to a train of reminiscences. The Democratic party, under the lead of General Jackson, put down *one* national bank as both unconstitutional and inexpedient. There are now more than sixteen hundred such banks. All over the country, on account of their enormous profits, these have enlisted great numbers of Democrats as stockholders, and they will constitute the most formidable obstacle to the triumph of the Democratic party. But this event must come sooner or later. I presume our friend Carlisle did not receive the book I sent him.

———, I perceive, has returned to Washington. Of all the absurd things I have encountered in my life, the cause of his enmity to me is the most absurd. I did him the greatest kindness which I could do to a father or a friend, by causing the lover of his daughter, to whom I was warmly attached, to be sent away quietly, instead of making the case a subject of diplomatic correspondence with the ——— government.

I sat down to write you a few lines, and I have now written an unconscionably long letter.

From your friend, as ever,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MISS HENRIETTA BUCHANAN.]

WHEATLAND, March 20, 1866.

MY DEAR HENRIETTA :—

I have recently had a photograph taken of myself, and as in duty bound I enclose you one of the first copies. They say it is a good likeness, and it certainly resembles the original, so far as old age and wrinkles are concerned.

I hope Annie and Harriet do not persecute you since their return home.

I hope you have as kind a friend to take your part against them as you found at Wheatland.

We are living along here very quietly, but servants are our great trouble. We have no boy at present, our chambermaid is about to get married, and the cook is going to housekeeping with her husband. On the first of April, for any thing I know at present, we shall be left in the vocative. . . . .

I have not heard from Mrs. Johnston since she left New York, but the papers inform us that she and Mr. Johnston have arrived at the Havana. . . .

I received a letter two or three days ago from your brother James, who is evidently far behind the time. He expresses the hope that Mr. and Mrs. Johnston are now living comfortably at Baltimore. I fear that the five Miss Buchanans do not keep their brother well posted in regard to current events.

Please to give my kind love to all, not excepting Annie and Harriet, if they have treated you with proper respect, and believe me to be ever

Yours very affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MRS. JOHNSTON.]

WHEATLAND, July 18th, 1866.

MY DEAR NIECE :—

I have received yours of the 12th, and desire to express my sympathy for your sufferings from the extreme heat of the weather. I have received a letter from Annie giving me an agreeable account of her visit to you, and stating what good a housekeeper you are, and how happy you are in your domestic relations. God grant this may ever continue! She says Mr. Johnston and yourself are looking forward to your paying me a visit in August, and that he is very anxious you should go to the country for a while. You know that my house is ever open to you, and you shall always receive a cordial welcome. The same, I am certain, will be extended to you whether I am at home or not. I feared, from your former life, that you might be inclined to leave home too often, and, therefore, I guarded you against such an inclination, but whenever you come here, you know how much pleasure your society would afford me, and this would be increased by that of Mr. Johnston.

I enclose you the last letter of Mrs. ———, and I confess I am disappointed that your name is not mentioned in it. Please to return it to me. I had only thought of going to Saratoga to meet her, and when informed she would not be there, I determined to go to Bedford, because I really require the use of the water. I intend to take Thomas with me, who has behaved very well since his last escapade. I do not anticipate a pleasant visit. The place will swarm with Republican intriguers. ——— and ——— have gone there in advance of the main column. The latter, though professing Democracy, will take part in all their intrigues on the Senator and other questions. . . . .

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MRS. JOHNSTON.]

BEDFORD SPRINGS, July 30th, 1866.

MY DEAR NIECE :—

I have received your favor of the 25th, and would answer it at greater length, but this will be delivered to you by Miss Goughey Carroll who can tell you all the news. My time passes pleasantly enough, and everybody is kind. I shall leave here with Mr. North on Monday, the 6th August, unless some friend should arrive in the meantime with whom I can travel home at a later period. Thomas is useless, and worse than useless. I shall send him home to-day or to-morrow.

You inquire, is there any possibility of Clymer's election? If I am to believe the shrewdest calculators in the State—I don't pretend to give my own opinion—he will certainly be elected. Such is Governor Porter's opinion, though he thinks that on joint ballot there will be a majority in the legislature against us. If so, a Republican will be elected Senator, and among the list of candidates,—*such candidates*, there is very little choice. Cameron's chance is, I think, the best. You have doubtless observed that Thaddeus Stevens has made the *amende honorable* for having charged us with spending more than the \$20,000 appropriated.\* . . . .

With my kind regards to Mr. Johnston, I remain

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

P. S.—If you so desire, you might come to Wheatland by the 8th August, whether I am at home or not.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. CAPEN.]

WHEATLAND, August 10, 1866.

MY DEAR SIR :—

I returned the day before yesterday from a visit to the Bedford Springs, from which I derived much benefit. . Indeed my health is now quite as good as I can reasonably expect, considering my age.

You ask my opinion as to the course which the approaching convention ought to pursue. Whilst I do not feel myself competent to state in detail what ought to be their proceedings, yet one thing is certain; they ought, neither directly nor indirectly, to break up the organization of the old Democratic party by forming anything like a new party. Leaving this as it is, and must ever remain, they ought to confine themselves pretty much to the question of reconstruction, and to the admission of Senators and Representatives from the Southern States.

Our most prudent and far-seeing politicians, as they inform me, believe that Mr. Clymer will be elected governor, and this would be the beginning of

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\* For furnishing the White House.

the end. But drop the principles and the name of Democracy, and our case would be hopeless. In regard to what your history should contain, I have nothing to say. Of this you are unquestionably the best judge. It possibly might appear to be an anachronism to introduce the events of the late war. But you know best.\* From your friend very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MISS JANE BUCHANAN.]

WHEATLAND, August 10, 1866.

MY DEAR JANE:—

Your letter of the 19th July was duly received, and would have been sooner acknowledged, but for my engagements at Bedford. I returned home on Tuesday afternoon, after a very agreeable visit, and one, I think, beneficial to my health. As in duty bound, I called to see the Nevins yesterday, and had the pleasure of meeting the bishop in embryo, and Cecil, as well as Doctor and Mrs. Nevin, and Blanche. I find that during my absence, all the younger branches of the family have been diligently employed in croquet. They won a match to which they were challenged by the townspeople, which gives them great satisfaction, and they are eager to enter the lists with Jennie Roland. Has it never occurred to a lady of your sedate character, that croquet, like dancing or any other innocent and healthful amusement, may be carried to excess? . . . . . Your future uncle, Rev. Dr. Alfred Nevin, has, I fear, sustained a damaging defeat in his controversy with Judge Black on the subject of political preaching. Can you not persuade your father to come to the rescue. . . . . The little house at the entrance of the park looks rather shabby, but I have promised you to put it in order, and on this you may rely.

You seem to have suffered much from the heat. Philosophers have calculated how many thousand years would be required to cool a ball of iron as large as the earth, but as your body is not very large, I trust that ere this you have become cool, and been relieved from the headache. I trust that Lois is also learning to live like other people.

——— was expected to return from Cape May last evening, where she had been for some time with her brother ———. I think she manifested a want of taste in not cultivating the “three rowdies.” Certain it is, sinner as I am, I found them very agreeable. I think she should marry, and to this I would have no objection, if her yoke-fellow should be a proper person.

I expect Mrs. Johnston here from the 15th to the 20th. I shall, indeed, be very glad to see her. The Baltimoreans whom I met at Bedford say she never looked better, and that she appears to be very happy. God grant that her marriage may prove prosperous, and that she may not neglect the things which belong to her everlasting peace!

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\* This refers to Mr. Capen's great work, “The History of Democracy; or, Political Progress Historically Illustrated,” by Nahum Capen, LL.D. The first volume was published in 1875.

Miss Hetty is as busy as ever, and although we now have a good waiter and cook and two good girls, yet her employment is incessant. She could not live without work. I have never known her to take so much to any of our visitors as she did to the three croquet players.

I have now nearly filled my sheet with a grave letter, and hope you will ponder over its contents.

Give my kindest love to your father and mother, as well as the rest, especially to Lois, for whom this letter is partly intended. Never again call her Lodi.

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. CAPEN.]

WHEATLAND, October 2, 1866.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I was greatly amused and pleased with the graphic description of your dream which placed me in the pulpit. We have sore need of such preachers as you saw in your vision. I fear that infidelity and indifference to religion are making rapid advances in our country. Away with political preachers!

I rejoice to learn your advancement in the very important history, and earnestly desire that the blessing of Heaven may rest upon your labors.

In answer to your inquiry about the probable result of our governor's election, I can say but little of my own knowledge. Our most discreet friends, however, calculate with considerable confidence on the election of Clymer. The President's pilgrimage to the tomb of Senator Douglas has done the cause no good. It would have been better had he rested on the issue as it was made by the Philadelphia Convention.

Mrs. Johnston returned to Baltimore a fortnight since in good health and spirits. I intend to pay her a visit soon after the election.

Your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO CHARLES GRAFFEN.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, December 22, 1866.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I regret deeply that I did not see the Philadelphia firemen at Wheatland on their recent visit to Lancaster. A visit from them would have been a gratification and an honor which I should have highly prized. Unfortunately, I did not receive Mr. Howell's note of the 18th, appointing the time at half-past nine o'clock of the next morning for the purpose, until the afternoon of the 19th at five o'clock. Instead of this being sent to me by messenger, it was deposited in the post office, and thus it did not come to hand more than seven hours after the time appointed for the visit. I would thank you to explain the circumstances to any of the firemen whom you may happen to meet,

should you deem this necessary. I should be deeply mortified could any of them suppose I had been wanting in the high respect to them so eminently their due.

From your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MESSRS. OSBORN AND BALDWIN.]

(Private.)

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, December 26, 1866.

GENTLEMEN :—

I received, on last evening, the New Haven *Daily Register*, containing an extract from Abbott's Lives of the Presidents. This is a repetition and concentration of all the slanders which were in circulation against myself during the first years of the war, notwithstanding their falsehood has been since established by clear and conclusive official evidence. For your very able and searching reply to Mr. Abbott's statements, please to accept my most cordial thanks. As the work purports to be history, I may possibly notice it in the only manner which would make its author feel how much injustice he has done me. I remain, very respectfully and gratefully,

Yours,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO THE REV. E. Y. BUCHANAN.]

WHEATLAND, December 29, 1866.

MY DEAR EDWARD :—

I have received your favor of the 26th, and am truly happy to learn that you and yours are in the enjoyment of good health, and that you have received so many substantial tokens of regard from your parishioners. May it be ever thus! My own health, thank God! is as good as it was when we parted in Philadelphia. Your kind wish that the good Lord may spare me to see many Christmases will scarcely be realized. This, at my advanced age, I cannot expect. May He enable me to be always prepared for my latter end!

. . . . .  
 . . . . .  
 . . . . .

Mr. and Mrs. Shunk passed the evening at ——'s a few days ago, and I was sorry to learn that a principal portion of the entertainment was spirit-rapping and communications from the spirits.

My dinner at Judge Cadwalader's was more than usually agreeable.

With my best love to your lady and family, I remain, as ever,

Your affectionate brother,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MRS. JOHNSTON.]

WHEATLAND, February 12, 1867.

MY DEAR NIECE:—

I was glad to receive your favor of the 6th, after so long an interval. Poor Mrs. Jenkins was buried yesterday, and Miss Old and myself were invited as mourners. Her death made a deep impression upon me. I have been intimately acquainted with her ever since I first came to Lancaster, and was groomsman at her wedding. Her life is all before me, and, with some slight failings, it is a beautiful picture. Her social and domestic character were nearly all that could have been desired. Whether in prosperous or adverse fortunes, she was ever the same kind wife, mother and friend. I was always attached to her.

My own health is now pretty much as usual, though after my dinner in Philadelphia, which was all I could have desired, I had a pretty sharp attack of rheumatism, which confined me to Wheatland for a week, but thank God! it has passed away. Like Achilles, I was wounded in the heel, and, funny enough, it passed out at the little toe. . . . .

I knew that Henrietta Jane would render herself agreeable wherever she went, and am not at all surprised that the Carrolls are unwilling to part from her. This shows they are sensible people. . . . .

I have not seen Mrs. Franklin since the receipt of your letter. When I do I shall not fail to inform her how much gratified you were with the present. . . . .

I regret to say that the slippers are much too large for me, and, therefore, I have not worn them; but, as a token of your regard, I value them as highly as if they were a good fit.

We have no local news of much importance, except that everybody is to be married. The engagement of young Mr. ——— to Miss ———, so soon after the death of ———, is thought by some to be strange.

On Thursday last, Jane Slaymaker, Harriet Old and Mrs. Lane passed the day with me on their own invitation, and it was a most agreeable day. Mrs. Jenkins was not considered at all dangerously ill on that day, though she died on the next. Mrs. Shunk was not with us, having gone over to York to look after her house. She is now here, as agreeable as ever, though Mr. Shunk has gone to Philadelphia for a few days. I see the Nevins as often as usual. The Doctor and Mrs. Nevin, Blanche and Wilberforce, were all at the funeral,

though the Bishop in embryo was not present. I presume he has returned to his studies, as his mother said nothing about him, and I forgot to ask her for him. . . . .

With my kind regards to Mr. Johnston, I remain,

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MRS. SHUNK.]

WHEATLAND, March 7th, 1867.

MY DEAR MADAM:—

On this auspicious anniversary of your birth, permit me to present my cordial wishes that you may enjoy many, very many, returns of it in peace, prosperity and happiness.

Please to accept the enclosed trifle as a birthday token of my affection and esteem for one whose society, during the last few months, has imparted a charm to my old age, the memory of which shall never be effaced from my heart. Deeply regretting that you must so soon leave me, I am, and ever shall remain,

Your much attached friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. NAHUM CAPEN.]

WHEATLAND, April 29th, 1867.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your favor of the 14th instant, and have perused, with much interest, your letter to the Rev. Mr. Blagden. The subject of it, which you treat so ably, has attracted but little attention in this part of the country; still, some symptoms are apparent that the Republicans in this State intend to make capital out of it. In this, I think, they will entirely fail. Lager beer, especially among the Germans, and old rye will be too strong for them. Still, intemperance is a great curse to our people, but it will never be put down by laws prohibiting the sale of all intoxicating liquors. . . . .

Mrs. Shunk left me more than a month ago, and is now at her father's, in Washington, with her husband. They will all return to York on the adjournment of the Supreme Court. She is one of the most charming persons I have ever known. I ought to add that Mr. Shunk's health is far from being good.

I have been endeavoring for the last two days to prepare an index for my book, but find great difficulty in the task.

The result of the spring election throughout our State has been favorable to the Democratic party; but we have of late years been so accustomed to defeat, that I shall not, too sanguinely, calculate on success in October.

Your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.



[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. NAHUM CAPEN.]

WHEATLAND, June 11, 1867.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Your kind letter of the 30th April would long ere this have been answered, but for an *intensely painful* attack of rheumatic gout, several weeks ago, from the effects of which I am now slowly recovering. The index was, of course, abandoned, probably forever. I cannot think for a moment of imposing the task upon you, by accepting your friendly offer. I am now in my seventy-seventh year, an age when my mind should be disembarrassed, as much as possible, from all worldly affairs.

I trust, for your sake, that the "Grand Hotel" may be a great success, and may fill your pockets with stores of gold.

I am glad that the Radical postmaster of Boston has been directed by the Department to apply to you for advice respecting the postal service. "Better late than never" to recognize the value of your improvements and your wise policy in removing the post office.

I no longer give any minute attention to passing political events; but I confess I entertain much apprehension from the efforts now being made to indoctrinate the negroes of the South with the belief that they are entitled to a portion of their old masters' real estate. When will Massachusetts stay her hand?

What is to become of the Supreme Court of the United States—the conservative branch of the Government? When I recall the names of the pure, able and venerable men who have filled the office of Chief Justice, from John Jay to Roger B. Taney, and witness the efforts of the present Chief Justice to drag the judicial ermine through the dirt to propitiate radicals, I cannot help thinking we have fallen upon evil times. But I am now an old fogey.

Should Judge Sharswod be nominated for Judge of our Supreme Court by the Judicial Convention this day, I venture the prediction that the Democratic party will triumph in his election in October.

Your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. BAKER.]

WHEATLAND, July 16, 1867.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Shortly after your last letter to me, several weeks ago, I wrote to Mr. Reed and invited him to Wheatland in the most cordial manner. I have received no answer from him, and think it probable he may have never received my letter; and yet, none of my letters between this and Philadelphia has ever miscarried. When you see him, I would thank you to ascertain how the matter is. I do not like to write myself under the circumstances.

Mr. and Mrs. Johnston will leave here on Thursday for Bedford, but I shall not accompany them. I am literally weak in the knees. Do you go any-

where this summer? I have some idea of visiting Long Branch or Cape May, for a few days, for sea bathing, but am reluctant to leave home.

I suppose you are now in the midst of your harvest, enjoying the delights of a country life and enacting the character of Farmer Baker. May your barn overflow with plenty!

With my kindest regards to Mrs. Baker, Miss Emily and all, I remain,  
Very respectfully, your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MRS. JOHNSTON.]

CAPE ISLAND, NEW JERSEY, August 14, 1867.

MY DEAR NIECE:—

I have received your favor of the 12th, and am rejoiced to learn that you are now at Wheatland, where I hope you may remain until the change of the season. You say nothing of the health of baby;\* but from your silence I infer this to be good. I do not know exactly when I shall leave this place, but I think early next week. I have been much pleased with my visit here, and have, I think, been strengthened, but much more by the sea air than the bathing. I am not quite certain that the latter agrees with me. We have had a great crowd all the time; but the weather has been charming and the company agreeable.

Mr. Bullitt of Philadelphia gave me a dinner the other day, which I only mention from the awkward situation in which I was placed by not being able to drink a drop of wine.

I am very well, thank God! Mr. Reed is expected this afternoon, and Judge Black to-morrow.

With my kindest regards to Mr. Johnston and Miss Hetty, I remain

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

P. S.—I ought not to omit to mention the obligations I am under to Mr. Baker for his kindness and attention.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MRS. SHUNK.]

WHEATLAND, near LANCASTER, September 2, 1867.

MY DEAR MRS. SHUNK:—

I know you will be glad to learn that I have so far recovered as to be able to sit up and write to you my first letter since the commencement of my very

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\* This child, James Buchanan Johnston, an object of the fondest interest to his great-uncle, grew to be a fine and very promising youth of fifteen, of great loveliness of character and marked intellectual powers. He died in Baltimore on the 25th of March, 1881. His younger brother, Henry, the only remaining child of Mr. and Mrs. Johnston, was taken by his parents to Europe in the autumn of 1881. He died at Nice on the 30th of October, 1882. Dark clouds have gathered over lives that were once full of happiness and hope.

dangerous illness. Thank God! the doctor gives me reason to believe I am now out of danger, and it has been His holy will to spare me a little longer.

Next to heaven, my thoughts have been fixed upon a preparation of my biography, as an act of justice to myself and the great men with whom I have been associated. This work shall be immediately prosecuted. I was rejoiced to learn from your favor of the 5th ultimo that Mr. Shunk will give me the notes and the review. Indeed, without the notes I know not how I could get along in regard to my earlier life. I hope he will send me all, as all will be useful. The slightest note will revive my memory. . . . .

I shall ever remember with heartfelt gratification the period during which I enjoyed your charming society at Wheatland. I trust you may visit me again before Mrs. Johnston leaves for Baltimore, which will be on the first proximo.

With kind love to your mother, Mary and Jane, and my regards for Mr. Shunk, I remain faithfully and affectionately your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

P. S.—You will please to deliver the notes and review to the bearer hereof, your old friend, James B. Henry, who will await your convenience.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO J. BUCHANAN HENRY.]

WHEATLAND, September 23, 1867.

MY DEAR JAMES:—

I regret to say that I have not received Benton's "Thirty Years," which you sent me by express some ten days ago. It has certainly not reached the office at Lancaster. Will you look after it, and, if not found, send me the receipt? I now need it.

The baby has been very sick, but probably not more so than what often happens to children in their teething. Harriet became alarmed and sent for Mr. Johnston, who is now here, but will leave this morning. The child is greatly better, but has yet got no tooth. He proposes to return and take his wife home the beginning of next week. . . . .

My health and strength are improving daily, but, in opposition to the doctor, I do not think the obstruction is entirely removed.

Yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. CAPEN.]

WHEATLAND, November 2, 1867.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Since the receipt of your favor of the 17th ultimo, I have had another attack of my old enemy, the gout, in a severe form, from which I am just now recovering. This is the only reason why I have not sooner answered

your letter and thanked you for your delicious pears. I shall use them as time mellows them. Please to present my grateful acknowledgments to Mrs. Raney for her contribution to the delicious fruit which has afforded so much pleasure to her father's old friend.

I hear perhaps once a week from Mr. and Mrs. Johnston. Both, as well as the little baby, are well.

I reciprocate your congratulations on the result of the late elections, and I do not doubt that New York, New Jersey and Connecticut will do their duty to the country. Still, it may be too late to restore material prosperity to the Southern States. The establishment of negro suffrage throughout their limits, as well as negro government, will nearly destroy the production of the articles which rendered both them and New England so prosperous. I have always been very much of an optimist, but I confess I have now greater fears for the future than I had during the war. Should New England teaching in the South produce a war of races, commenced by the negroes for rights in the soil of their masters, which they claim under the teachings of Sumner, Stevens, and other self-styled philanthropists, the result would be too horrible for contemplation. But enough. Your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. CAPEN.]

WHEATLAND, October 19, 1867.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received your congratulations on the result of the late elections with heartfelt pleasure. For this we are mainly indebted to the attempts on the part of Congress to grant suffrage to the negroes, although there are many other good causes for the reaction in the popular mind. Negro emancipation is a fixed fact, and so let it remain forever; but the high privilege of voting can only be constitutionally granted by the Legislatures of the respective States.

I am happy to inform you that, under the blessing of Providence, my health has been restored to its former condition. Indeed, I believe I am better than I was before my attack.

I have no news which would interest you except the old declaration that I am now, and always shall be,

Sincerely your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. BAKER.]

WHEATLAND, October 31, 1867.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have just received a letter from Sample, who expresses a strong desire to remain on the farm, and says that the impression he intended to leave must have arisen from the fact that he has been looking out for a farm for his brother. I shall not remove him.

The sting of the poisonous insect, whatever it may have been, is now converted into a painful attack of gout in my left hand and wrist. I have not been able to attend to the biography, or prepare for Mr. Reed. I presume, however, that the trial of Jeff. Davis will occupy all his thoughts until after it shall be over.

With my kindest regards to Mrs. Baker and my love to Emily,

I remain, always your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. SCHELL.]

WHEATLAND, November 9, 1867.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have received a proxy, to be signed by me, from Robert L. Banks to H. Henry Baxter, to vote my shares in the New York Central Road Company, at the approaching election for directors. Before filling it up, I desire to know whether it is in accordance with your wishes. I desire to vote according to your wishes.

You have done nobly in New York at the recent election, and your Democracy have earned the gratitude of the whole country. *The opposition to Negro Suffrage in the South*, as well as in the North, has been the principal cause of our triumph everywhere. Abandon this, and we are gone. The Constitution, as expounded by the Democratic fathers, ought to be our watchword. It is long enough and wide enough to cover all our interests, and needs not to be enlarged to suit our present size, as recommended by the *World*. Emancipation is now a constitutional fact, but to prescribe the right and privilege of suffrage belongs exclusively to the States. This principle the Democracy must uphold in opposition to the Reconstruction Acts.

I am getting along as usual, and have had much company of late. The Misses Pleasonton have been with me for some weeks, and I find their society very agreeable. I am sorry to say they will leave in a few days.

Your friend, as ever,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. JOHNSTON.]

WHEATLAND, November 14, 1867.

MY DEAR SIR:—

. . . . .  
 . . . . .

I know how cordially welcome I would be at your house, but I fear I shall not be able to pay you a visit for months to come. Like all old men, I feel a very strong reluctance to leave home. The idea of becoming dangerously ill

away from home deters me from going abroad. Although relieved from acute pain in my left hand and arm, yet my hand is still so weak and swollen that I cannot carve, and it is but a few days since I ceased to have the meat on my own plate cut up for me. And to add to all this, my left eye is now as black as if I had been fighting with shillelahs at Donnybrook Fair. On Saturday last, supposing that I was at the head of the steps on the front porch, I took a step forward as if on the level, and fell with my whole weight on the floor, striking my head against one of the posts. Thanks to the thickness and strength of my skull, it was not broken, and the only bad consequence from it is a very black eye. How soon this will disappear I know not. I sincerely and devoutly thank God it is no worse. During all this time, the Misses Pleasonton have been a great comfort to me, and I am truly sorry they will leave me on Tuesday next. I do not fear, however, that I shall be miserable without them. I have had a good deal of transient company this fall. But what a long rignarole I have written.

. . . . .  
 . . . . .  
 . . . . .

I rejoice to learn that the baby is thriving so finely. Please to remember me kindly to Miss Snyder, and with my best love to Harriet,

I remain, your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MRS. JOHNSTON.]

WHEATLAND, December 9, 1867.

MY DEAR NIECE:—

I have received yours of the 3d instant, and am happy to learn that baby has recovered from the effects of his trip to New York. You need not be sorry to hear that James left me as soon as I gave him notice that I would not want him after the 1st January. I have obtained a much better man, a Frenchman, for the month of December. Indeed, he is so good, I shall be sorry to part from him.

I was truly sorry to hear of the death of my kinsman, Mr. Russell. He was an able and excellent man. It appears that he died a Roman Catholic, which, doubtless, gratified his wife and family. I wrote to her the day after I received the paper from you.

I perceive, by a cable despatch, that Mrs. Eustis is dead. I sincerely sympathize with her father, although he behaved badly to me, notwithstanding I rendered both her and him the greatest service in my power. I always liked her very much. . . . .

I wrote a few days ago for Henrietta Jane, with a request that either Harriet or Lois might accompany her. Edward's answer, without mentioning

the name of Harriet, informed me that Lois would follow Henrietta in two or three weeks. Thereupon, I wrote to Henrietta, giving Harriet a kind and pressing invitation to come in the meantime. It is doubtful whether she will accept it. Henrietta is to be here on Wednesday, as well as Emily Baker, so that I may expect a gay house. . . . .

I have no local news to give you beyond what you see in the *Intelligencer*. The Nevins are as kind as usual. Blanche is an excellent reader. The Doctor passed an evening with me a few days ago. Robert has undoubtedly received great attentions from the clergy in England, and has preached there once, if not oftener. I was sorry to learn he was obliged to go to France on account of his health.

I hardly know what to say in regard to my own health, though it has been pretty good for the last two or three days. Even had Mr. Reed been able to come here, I felt so dull and listless as to be almost incapable of mental exertion. Writing was a great labor to me. I have felt bright for a few days.

I fully realize the truth of the Psalmist's expression, that "The days of our years are three score and ten, and if, by reason of strength, they be four score years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow, for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." Nevertheless, I am neither dejected nor sorrowful, but preserve a calm and tranquil spirit, thank God! My left hand is still feeble, but is gradually growing stronger.

It is quite impossible that I should pay you a visit during the holidays, though you must know I would be very happy to see you. With my kind regards to Mr. Johnston, I remain, as ever, yours affectionately,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO DR. BLAKE.]

WHEATLAND, December 25, 1867.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I owe you many thanks for your biographical sketch of Mr. Jones. I have perused it with great interest and pleasure. It is a worthy tribute to an excellent man. At the request of the first Mrs. Webster and Mrs. George Blake, I accompanied them to the house of Mrs. Mattingly, a few days after the alleged miracle had been performed, and heard her own relation of all the circumstances attending it from her own lips.

I have, also, to thank you for the report of the Secretary of the Treasury.

Thank God! my own health is now pretty good—quite as good as a man of my age has any reason to expect.

I have been cheered by the company of the Misses Pleasanton, and after their departure by that of two of my nieces, the daughters of my brother, and Miss Baker, who are still with me. They have made the house gay and agreeable.

I have no local news to communicate which would be of any interest to you.

I saw a telegram, some weeks ago, announcing the death of Mrs. Eustis, and sincerely sympathize with her father on account of his sad bereavement.

I presume the interest due on the Virginia bonds, on the 1st January next, will not be paid. Should I be mistaken, please to inform me of it, so that I may send you a draft on John B. Martin, Cashier, for \$220, as I did before.

Wishing you, with all my heart, long life, health and prosperity, I remain, ever very respectfully,

Your friend, -

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MRS. JOHNSTON.]

WHEATLAND, January 1st, 1868.

MY DEAR NIECE:—

I have received yours of the 27th ultimo, and am rejoiced to know that your health is good as well as that of baby. I sincerely and ardently pray for your boy long life, happiness and prosperity, and that he may become a wise and a useful man, under the blessing of Providence, in his day and generation. Much will depend on his early and Christian training. Be not too indulgent, nor make him too much of an idol.

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 . . . . .  
 . . . . .

Miss Emily's party passed off very well. She is gay, sprightly and agreeable, and has much more information than I had supposed. Her father is my best and most useful friend, who is always ready to serve me, and I wished to treat his daughter kindly.

Harriet and Henrietta are still with me, but the former, I regret to say, will leave some time next week. . . . .

We have no local news of interest. The Nevins and myself get along kindly, as usual.

With my kindest regards to Mr. Johnston, I remain,

Yours, with great affection,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MISS BAKER.]

WHEATLAND, January 1, 1868.

MY DEAR EMILY:—

I have received your kind note of the 29th, and can assure you we all missed you very much, and I was almost broken-hearted at your departure. Still, I think I shall survive in the hope that you may visit us again during the winter. I thank you for the *Church Journal*. It must be a paper according to your own heart. I think I can see you standing gracefully on the highest



pinnacle of Ritualism, and taking your flight over to Romanism. You will not have a difficult passage to the dome of St. Peter's.

John Strube has, I believe, got a place for the winter, but, I have no doubt, he will gladly go to your father as a gardener in the spring.

The two girls and Miss Hetty send their kindest love to you.

With my very best wishes for your health, prosperity and happiness, I remain, respectfully and affectionately

Your friend,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. NAHUM CAPEN.]

WHEATLAND, January 11, 1868.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Many thanks for your kind New Year's greeting! The friendship and good wishes which you express for me are cordially reciprocated. May you live many years in health, peace and prosperity, and may your great work prove to be a triumph for yourself and a lasting benefit for your country! I think you were right in not turning away from it to write a volume of four hundred pages, as a political hand-book for the next Presidential campaign. Such a volume would be highly useful and important, but it may well be prepared by Messrs. Burke and Gillet. Should they undertake the task, I would suggest that you recommend to them a careful perusal of the debates and proceedings of Congress during the extra session, after the election of General Harrison (first Session of 27th Congress, 1841). Mr. Burke was then a member of the House.

Thank God! I now enjoy reasonably good health.

Your friend, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

## CHAPTER XXX.

1868.

DEATH OF MR. BUCHANAN—HIS CHARACTER AS A STATESMAN, A MAN  
AND A CHRISTIAN.

NOTWITHSTANDING the prospect of longer life with which the year 1868 began for Mr. Buchanan, the end was drawing near. The world and the world's interests faded away, the unknown future opened before him, and naught earthly remained for the strong old man, bound down by the infirmities of age, but the tender care of those who had assembled to soothe and cheer him.

When in health, he was very fond of having bright and cultivated women about him, and in sickness he was peculiarly dependent on their ministrations. For him, there had never been wife or child. But he was specially blest by female kindred, who never failed or faltered in their devotion to him. There were present at Wheatland, during his last illness, his brother, the Rev. Dr. Buchanan; Miss Henrietta Buchanan, daughter of that gentleman; Mr. and Mrs. Johnston; Mr. Henry, and the ever faithful "Miss Hetty." Kind neighbors were at hand, among whom his friend, the Rev. Dr. Nevin, was one of the most assiduous. Doctor Buchanan was obliged to return to his home, near Philadelphia, two days before the death occurred, at which time the event was apparently not very near. Miss Henrietta Buchanan, whose absence from her uncle's room, even for a short time, made him impatient, as well as Mrs. Johnston and Miss Parker, watched him with the utmost tenderness to the last. So did the others whom I have named. His death, the immediate cause of which was rheumatic gout, occurred on the morning of June 1st, 1868, in his 78th year.

His last hours were free from suffering, and his mind was clear. Miss Annie Buchanan says, in a communication addressed to me:—

In his last year he began to feel that he was very old, and looked forward to death, and spoke as if he expected it constantly. Not that his health was such as to create this expectation, for it was as good as persons of his age usually enjoy. He had a very severe illness soon after his return from Washington.

He had, previous to that illness, been unusually strong and well, but afterwards I do not think he was quite so much so. He had attacks of gout, more or less severe, at intervals, up to the time of his death. He had, besides, an illness which came upon him during a short visit which he paid to Cape May, which prostrated him so much that it was necessary to take him home as a sick man.

Each one of these illnesses made him realize more clearly that his hold on life was very weak, that the "silver cord would soon be loosed," and he devoted himself to making all necessary preparations for that great event. His affairs were all arranged with exactness, so as to cause as little confusion as possible after his death. He chose the exact spot for his last resting place, saying, either as expressing a desire or as predicting a fact, that he would lie alone. Having carefully arranged all his plans, he waited, with faith and hope, for the final change which would open to him the real and satisfying life. When the dreaded messenger came, those who loved him knew that rest had come to him at last, and that his "faith had changed to glad fruition."

The funeral obsequies of the late President took place at Lancaster, on the 4th of June, with every imposing demonstration that was consistent with a proper respect for his unostentatious character. I need not describe the scene, or recapitulate the ceremonies by which the event of his death was marked throughout the country. They may be read in the public journals of the time. But from the funeral sermon, preached over his remains by the Rev. John W. Nevin, D.D., President of Franklin and Marshall College, an extract must be permanently recorded in these pages, at the close of the present chapter.

It is unnecessary for me to undertake a formal and elaborate portrayal of Mr. Buchanan's character as an American statesman. It has been exhibited in the foregoing pages, and the reader does not need to be farther assisted by me in his estimate of the public character of the man. But there are some observations which

should be made by the author of this work, before citing the testimony of those who stood to him in the relations of near kindred, or of personal friendship.

There may be persons who will be disposed to think that he should not have allowed himself, in his old age, to be disturbed by the attacks that were made upon him by the press after his retirement from public life. But such persons should remember that he had to administer the Executive Government at a very trying period, and that many of the charges that were subsequently made against him involved his integrity as a statesman, and the oath of office which every President must take to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. Moreover, I cannot, for one, subscribe to the philosophy which assumes that a statesman should be indifferent to what is said of him by his contemporaries, or to what is made to pass into the materials of history, if it be not corrected. It must be admitted that in all free countries there is prurient appetite for detraction, and our American world is certainly not free from it. A considerable part of the public, in a certain sense, enjoys disparagement of the characters of very eminent public men. If this were not so, the press would at least be more careful and more conscientious than it often is. The absolute freedom of the press is of the utmost consequence. Its licentiousness is best restrained by the moral sense of the community, in the case of the higher statesmen; and to the extent to which this restraint does not operate, vast mischief may be done. It is impossible for posterity to know how to estimate any man who has filled a conspicuous place in history, if the materials for a sober judgment are to be looked for only in the criticisms or laudations of the contemporary press; nor is it generally in the power of posterity to determine what deduction is to be made from the assertions or opinions of contemporaries, on account of the rancor of party or the malice of individuals. If Mr. Buchanan had not taken the pains, which he did take, to collect and preserve the most ample proof of his acts, his purposes, and his efforts as President of the United States, he would have gone down to future ages in a light utterly false, simply because he happened to be the object of enormous misrepresentations from motives of party policy or personal ill-will, without the protec-

tion which the community should have thrown around him at the time. That this protection was to a great degree wanting, is doubtless due to the existence of public danger, and to the passions which may find their excuse in the fact that in many minds they had their origin in patriotism, whilst in many the origin was of the basest description. That he, who was the object of all this misconception and misrepresentation, forbore, as long as there was serious danger to the institutions of the country, to demand the public attention as he might have demanded it, and calmly relied on the judgments of the future, is to be accounted to him for a praise and a public spirit of no ordinary kind. No man was ever treated with greater injustice than he was during the last seven years of his life by a large part of the public, and yet he bore it with dignity and with an unchanged love of country.

In regard to his moral and religious character and his personal virtues, I should not feel that I had done my duty if I did not here say what has impressed me in my study of the man.

His strong family affections, his engaging social qualities, his fidelity to friends, and his forgiving temper towards those who had injured him, or from whom he had once been estranged, are well known. To those who stood in the relation of friends, he was ever a most generous benefactor. Many a man received from him pecuniary aid which prevented disaster and ruin, and which could not be repaid by political service, for in many cases the individual never had it in his power to repay in anything but the simple discharge of the pecuniary obligation. This had been his habit all his life, as I learn from a full examination of his private papers, and he did not cease from it when political service was no longer needed. His tender of such aid often came without solicitation. He would not allow a friend whom he valued to incur serious loss, when he knew of the danger, and could supply the means of averting it. For what was justly his due, he expected and required performance; but he was always a forbearing and considerate creditor. For the poor, he ever had a tender and thoughtful feeling. The city of Lancaster holds in perpetual trust, under his will, a benefaction of a peculiar kind, which marks the nature of his charities, and was large for one of his means.

That he did not enrich himself out of the public, or receive gifts, or accumulate money by means of the opportunities afforded by his public positions, or give way to the weakness of nepotism, should, perhaps, not be mentioned to his praise, if it were not that his example in these respects has become conspicuous by contrast.

No charge against his moral character or personal virtue has ever been made to my knowledge. It was doubtless his early Presbyterian training by religious parents that saved him, amid all the temptations of a long and varied life and the widest social experience, from any deviation from the path of virtue. The tongue of scandal, the prying curiosity of the censorious, or of those who are always ready to drag down others to their own level, never could fasten upon his intercourse with the other sex any cause for suspicion, nor could the wiles of the impure ever ensnare him. It is believed by those who knew him best that his life was in this respect absolutely without stain, as his conversation, although very often gay and festive, is known to have always been free from any taint of impurity. He was a man of too much refinement to be guilty of indelicacy in anecdote or illustration, or to allow of it in his presence.

The reader who has perused what I have written and quoted must have seen that there are scattered all through his life traces of a strong religious tendency and religious habits, a deep sense of religious obligation, a belief in the existence and government of God, and a full faith that this world is not the only sphere of man's existence. That he had a habit of daily prayer, according to the injunction which said, "Enter into thy closet," is perfectly well authenticated.

There may be men of the world who will smile when they read of a statesman, in a grave juncture of public affairs in which he had to deal with the passions and ambitions of individuals and with the conflicting feelings and interests of great communities, seeking guidance from his Maker. Prayer in the midst of party politics and the business of official life may possibly provoke the cold derision of some part of mankind. Whether it is or is not efficacious in human affairs—whether a resort to it is a sign of weakness or of strength, is just as men think and feel. Be it one way or the other, I did not dare to

withhold this trait of character, which was revealed in the simplest manner in a confidential letter, in which he said of himself that he weighed well and prayerfully the course that he ought to adopt, at a time most critical for his country and for himself. I leave it for such estimate as the religious or the irreligious world may form, according to their respective tendencies, adding, however, that what he said of himself on that special occasion appears, on the testimony of those who knew him best, to have been in accordance with the habit of his life.

There was, in truth, no fanaticism in this man's nature, no cant in his speech or writing, whatever of either there may have been in those stern Puritans of an earlier age, in whom policy and valor and worldly wisdom and statecraft were strangely mixed with a religious enthusiasm which made them feel that they were the chosen of the Lord. The blood that he drew from a remote ancestry of pious Scotchmen had been tempered by the practical sense of our American life, and yet it had not lost the conviction of man's relation to his God.

When he was about to embark on the mission to Russia a female friend of his in Lancaster, Mrs. E. J. Reigart, presented him with a copy of the book called "Jay's Exercises." This was a book of short sermons, or lessons, for every day in the year, each on some appropriate text of Scripture, and was much in use among Presbyterians. The style was quaint, and the comments on the various texts were marked by a good deal of excellent sense and much religious feeling. Mr. Buchanan made daily use of it through the remainder of his life, wherever he was. On its margin he noted the dates of his embarkation for Liverpool, of his arrival there, and at London, Hamburg and Lubeck. The text and lesson for the day on which he arrived at Lubeck, on his way to St. Petersburg, read somewhat oddly:

"May 26th. *Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.* Psalm ii. 8.—The heathen—the uttermost parts of the earth—viewed in the representations of Scripture and the reports of historians, travellers and missionaries, seem a very unenviable acquisition. If it is true that the whole world lieth in wickedness, it seems fitter to be the inheritance and posses-

sion of Satan than the Son of God. But two things are to be taken into the account. Notwithstanding the present condition of the estate it contains very *valuable* and *convertible* materials."

That he did not make what is called a public profession of religion until a late period of his life is accounted for in an interesting paper which I have received from the Rev. William M. Paxton, D.D., pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, in the City of New York. Dr. Paxton, in answer to my inquiry, kindly wrote to me on the 11th of April, 1883, as follows:

In the month of August, in the year 1860, Mr. Buchanan, then President of the United States, visited the Bedford Springs, in the State of Pennsylvania. I happened to be present when the stage arrived, and having had a previous personal acquaintance with him, was one of the first to bid him welcome.

A day or two afterwards, as he passed me in the hall, he stopped and said, "May I take the liberty of sending for you to come to my room, when I can find leisure for a conversation?" To this I replied that it would give me great pleasure to obey such a call. The next day the invitation came, through his private secretary, and when we were seated alone, he turned to me and said, "I sent for you to request that you will favor me with a conversation upon the subject of religion. I knew your father and mother in early life, and, as you have some knowledge of my family, you are aware that I was religiously educated. But for some years I have been much more thoughtful than formerly upon religious subjects. I think I may say that for twelve years I have been in the habit of reading the Bible and praying daily. I have never had any one with whom I have felt disposed to converse, but now that I find you here, I have thought that you would understand my feelings, and that I would venture to open my mind to you upon this important subject, and ask for an explanation of some things that I do not clearly understand." When I had assured him that I would be gratified to have such a conversation, he began immediately by asking, "Will you be good enough to explain to me what an experience of religion is?" In answer, I opened to him the Bible account of our sinful estate, and of the necessity of regeneration by the Spirit of God, and of atonement through the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. He then began to question me, as closely as a lawyer would question a witness, upon all the points connected with regeneration, atonement, repentance and faith. What surprised me was that his questions were not so much of a doctrinal as of an experimental character. He seemed anxious to understand how a man might know that he was a Christian, and what conscious experiences entered into the exercises of repentance and faith. It is needless for me to detail the particulars of the conversation. It gave me an opportunity of speaking to him in the most simple and familiar way. When I related the experience of some eminent Christian, or used a simple illustration, such as I have employed



in Sabbath school addresses, he seemed much gratified, and proceeded to put his questions to draw out still more definite explanations. He particularly was anxious to understand how faith receives and appropriates the Lord Jesus Christ, and how a man may know that he believes. He put himself in the position of a little child, and asked questions in the simplest manner. Sometimes he asked me to go over an explanation a second time, as if he wished to fix it upon his memory. His manner was so earnest, and his mind was evidently so deeply engaged, that I was strongly impressed with the conviction of his entire sincerity.

After the more experimental points had been disposed of, he asked a few purely doctrinal questions, the answers to which he received without any disposition to enter upon a discussion. At the close of the conversation, he asked particularly what were the conditions of membership in the Presbyterian Church, and what were the points upon which an applicant for admission would be examined. The conversation lasted, probably, from two to three hours. After sitting quiet for a few minutes, he said, "Well, sir, I thank you. My mind is now made up. I hope that I am a Christian. I think I have much of the experience which you describe, and, as soon as I retire from my office as President, I will unite with the Presbyterian Church." To this, I replied, "Why not *now*, Mr. President? God's invitation is *now*, and you should not say *to-morrow*." To this he answered, with deep feeling, and with a strong gesture, "I must delay, for the *honor of religion*. If I were to unite with the Church *now*, they would say hypocrite from Maine to Georgia." I felt the truth of his answer, and did not continue my urgency.

This closed our conversation, but, as Mr. Buchanan remained at the Springs for some time, he seemed to seize every opportunity, when he met me in the hall or in the parlor, to ask some question which he had been pondering, or to repeat some passage of Scripture upon which his mind had been dwelling, and ask how I understood it. For example, meeting me in the passage, he asked me the meaning of the verse, "The bruised reed he will not break: the smoking flax he will not quench;" and when I explained the figures, and showed how beautifully they expressed the tenderness of our Lord, he seemed to exhibit the most simple-hearted gratification.

I take pleasure in giving these recollections for record, because I have never entertained a doubt of the entire honesty of Mr. Buchanan's religious impressions. I did not agree with him in politics, or feel any sympathy with his public career; but I think that he is entitled to this testimony from one who was placed in circumstances to judge fairly of the reality of his religious convictions. The purpose which President Buchanan expressed to me of uniting with the Church was fulfilled. He connected himself with the Presbyterian Church in Lancaster, Pa., immediately after his retirement from the Presidential chair.

Mr. J. Buchanan Henry concludes his communication to me, from which I have already quoted, as follows:

In personal appearance Mr. Buchanan was tall—over six feet, broad shouldered, and had a portly and dignified bearing. He wore no beard; his complexion was clear and very fair; his forehead was massive, white and smooth; his features strong and well marked, and his white hair was abundant and silky in texture; his eyes were blue, intelligent and kindly, with the peculiarity that one was far and the other near sighted, which resulted in a slight habitual inclination of the head to one side—a peculiarity that will be remembered by those who knew him well. He dressed with great care, in black, wearing always a full white cravat, which did not, however, impart to him anything of a clerical aspect. He was, on the whole, a distinguished looking and handsome man, and his size and fine proportions gave a dignity and commanding air to his personal presence. His manner and bearing had much of the old-fashioned courtly school about it.\*

I do not think he was a very easy or fluent public speaker, but what he had to say always commanded attention, even among his great compeers in the Senate.

Mr. Buchanan's parents were Presbyterians, and he always evinced a preference for that form of worship. He was a regular attendant upon church services, both at Washington and in Lancaster, being a pew holder and an always generous contributor to both the building and maintenance of Christian worship. I have known him to give a thousand dollars at a time in aid of building funds for churches of all denominations, and many of his most faithful friends were members of the Roman Catholic communion. He was, to my knowledge, always a sincere believer in all the cardinal doctrines of Christianity, had no eccentricities of religious belief, but accepted Christianity as a divine revelation and a simple rule for the conduct of human life, and relied upon it for the guidance of his own life. He certainly always pressed their force upon my cousin and myself, in our family intercourse under his roof, as his wards. I remember that she and I always hid away our secular newspaper or novel on Sunday if we heard him approaching, as we were otherwise pretty sure to get a mild rebuke for not better employing our time on Sunday, either in good works, or at least in better reading.

The candid student of history, intent only on getting at the very truth without fear, favor or prejudice, after the perusal of President Buchanan's plain exposition of the threatenings of the impending rebellion, as set forth in his message of December, 1860, and the message of January 8, 1861, must ask the question, why did not the Congress, sole constitutional depository of the power to raise armies or to call out the militia, then and there, by proper legislation, authorize the President to stamp out the incipient revolt by voting the money for and the authority to employ any necessary military force to

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\* The frontispiece of the first volume of this work is from a portrait painted by Eicholtz for Mr. Buchanan's sister, Mrs. Lane, just before he went to Russia. It was engraved for this work by Sartain, of Philadelphia. The frontispiece of the second volume is a full length, by J. C. Buttre, of New York, engraved for this work, in a reduced size, from a larger plate by the same artist.

accomplish the legitimate end? I have reason to know that the President would not have hesitated to faithfully execute any law which Congress might then have enacted. Why, then, did Congress, from December to March, with the plain facts fully brought to their attention by President Buchanan, and in the face of such imminent public peril, neglect to perform its constitutional function, or to vote either supplies or men? What more could President Buchanan have legally done? Should he have become an usurper, and declared himself Dictator, after the fashion of South America? The conclusion must be, that Congress, from some inexplicable reason, saw fit to abdicate its functions, leaving its powers dormant at the most critical period. Can it have been from any unworthy partisan motive? It could not have been from doubt of its possessing the authority. Whilst President Buchanan held, and rightly held, that he could find no authority in the Constitution to coerce the States, *as States*, or mere legal entities, he clearly enunciated the true doctrine of the constitutional power of the National Government to fully enforce its laws, by acting coercively upon the persons of all citizens when in revolt or resistance to its authority, wherever they might be, and whether as individuals or massed together in armies. That doctrine then set forth by Mr. Buchanan was unpopular, but it stands to-day confessed to be the only true construction of the Constitution. After the flames of a four years' civil conflagration had beaten against the text, no important writer on the organic law held any other construction to be tenable. Its present universal acceptance proves the sagacity and correctness of Mr. Buchanan's views at that early date.

If there was any more marked political bias of Mr. Buchanan's mind than any other it was that of an almost idolatrous respect and reverence for the Constitution. He had been educated and lived in the old constitutional school of statesmanship, and wholly believed in the wisdom and perfection of that great organic law devised by the founders and builders of our Government. He fully and ardently believed in its sufficiency for all purposes, whether of peace or war. Perhaps such a faith as was entertained by that race of statesmen would be considered by the present lax school as savoring of political fetichism. Certainly there were many who so regarded it, and who rather contemptuously avowed in Congress that their views and measures were, in many instances, extra-constitutional. To me, at least, this knowledge of Mr. Buchanan's political religion, so to speak, explains why he did not for an instant contemplate the usurpation—for usurpation it would have been, pure and simple—of the constitutional prerogatives of Congress to declare war, or, at least, to precipitate war; or by seizing the persons of the Southern members of Congress and of the State authorities who were working to secure the secession of their several States. Congress was in session, and it was, that being the case, only for the President to lay the facts before that body and obey their behest, whether for peace or war. No belief that the American people would have condoned his usurpation, if made, or have upheld his extra-constitutional act, such as calling for volunteers, or declaring war, or making an aggressive war, would have justified him in assuming the prerogatives of

Congress, then actually in session. Although such an act might have made him the most popular idol in American history, I do not think he could have been tempted to break his solemn oath to support the Constitution, by ignoring its plainest provisions. "Nothing succeeds like success." I am sometimes asked why Mr. Buchanan did not "take the responsibility?" Such a course would have remained impossible to him, with his views of his duty, and I think that in time he will be applauded, not blamed, for his self-sacrificing devotion to what he regarded as the right, rather than seeking his own personal popularity by illegal means.

I cannot close without a few words upon my uncle's views upon slavery. He simply tolerated it as a legal fact under our Constitution. He had no admiration for it whatever. I know of a number of instances in which he purchased the freedom of slaves in Washington, and brought them to Pennsylvania with him, leaving it to them to repay him if they could out of their wages. His constant recognition of the legal existence of slavery in the South, and its right to protection so long as it legally existed there, rendered him liable to misrepresentation at the North and to misconception at the South; the one regarding him as an apologist of slavery, and the other as its open friend, whereas he was neither. He was only desirous to see the Constitution and laws obeyed, and did, emphatically, not believe in the so-called "Higher Law." In fact I cannot but regard Mr. Buchanan as having been cruelly misrepresented at the North and betrayed by the South, which began its unjustifiable secession when quite safe from any invasion of its Constitutional rights. The Southern leaders did not hesitate to precipitate what they knew would be disastrous to his benign administration, if it did not actually terminate it in blood. It was, too, the grossest ingratitude to the Democratic party, which had always stood like a wall of fire between the South and its assailants in the North.

Mr. Buchanan, to the day of his death, expressed to me his abiding conviction that the American people would, in due time, come to regard his course as the only one which at that time promised any hope of saving the nation from a bloody and devastating war, and would recognize the integrity and wisdom of his course in administering the Government for the good of the whole people, whether North or South. His conviction on this point was so genuine that he looked forward serenely to the future, and never seemed to entertain a misgiving or a doubt.

The day is now not very far off when the American people will appreciate his faithful services to the Republic, his stainless character and his exalted patriotism.

The remainder of Miss Annie Buchanan's very interesting paper is as follows:

The society in Lancaster, at the time of my uncle's early residence there, must have been quite above the average in intellectual culture and in social

qualities. He was very fond, in the latter part of his life, of conversing about those times, and told a great many anecdotes of them and of the people who flourished in them. Unfortunately, they have gone from our memory, only leaving behind faint outlines of their former interest.

My uncle had the most delightful way of throwing himself back into the past scenes of his life, and, as it were, living them over again. He would tell you the whole position of affairs, make you understand the point of the story thoroughly, and then laugh in a most infectious way. When he was in a vein of conversation, and felt in the humor for going back into the past, a whole room full of people would sit all the evening, listening with delight, no one daring to interrupt, except in order, by some leading question or remark, to draw him out to talk more freely.

After his return from Washington, it was his constant habit to come into the parlor after tea, and there to spend the evening, with whatever members of the family might be staying with him. After listening, as he often did, to reading for an hour, he would begin to converse, and it was a rare treat to be a sharer in these conversations. I knew it to be a great privilege, thoroughly appreciated it at the time, but now that those evenings are forever gone, with what mingled feelings of delight and regret I look back upon them! They always ended at ten o'clock, and he very seldom sat up much after that hour, even when he had guests in the house who did not care to retire so early. "The time for all good Christians to be in bed," he would say, and, bidding good-night, would leave us to remain as long as we saw fit.

Of course my uncle was not always in the vein of talking in the way I have described, and sometimes much preferred having others to talk to him. I have often been struck with the easy grace with which he, who had been so much a man of the world, and had associated with men and women of the highest culture, could take and show the greatest interest in the rather uninteresting details given by some humble neighbor about the sayings and doings of his family and establishment. My uncle was a Democrat, not only in political principle, but in the large and true democratic sense. He looked upon his neighbors, even those who were plain and uneducated, as his fellow-men, and treated them accordingly.

I remember his talking to me very earnestly about visiting and relieving the sick and the poor, and trying to make me realize that Christianity which could lack this fruit must be worthless.

On one occasion, when I was quite a child and on a visit to Wheatland, I saw him go anxiously to the window and look upon the night, which was cold and stormy, with sleet and snow, and I heard him say, "God help the poor to-night!" I mention this because very soon after, I think the next day, he sent some money, quite a large sum, to the mayor of Lancaster, to buy fuel for the poor. The same idea he carried out, when he made a provision in his last will for this very purpose.

My uncle was very generous to those who were in need, and very many were the persons whom he helped by gifts and loans, who would otherwise

have been in great straits. He was not lavish in his expenditures. He knew exactly what he was spending, spent nothing foolishly, was careful of what money he had, and was anxious to invest what he had in such a way as that it should be remunerative, so that when he gave, he did it from principle, because he wished to do a kindness, or because he thought it was right to do it. His heart made him always anxious to ameliorate the miseries of those around him.

He was very much interested in his family and their welfare, and to him it was that each and all looked for advice or assistance. While he did not hesitate to speak sternly when he thought duty required it—sometimes even more so than was necessary—he was always ready, even at the same time, to lend a helping hand. He was the oldest child of my grandfather who lived to grow up, and this fact, together with his eminent uprightness and wisdom, made him to be looked upon by all the different branches of the family as their head. Our particular family have great reason to remember his kindness, and we look back with great pleasure to the many visits of months at a time which we paid him, at his request, both at Wheatland and in Washington. After his death, we felt that we had lost the friend who, next to our own father, cared most for us, and one on whose sympathy and kindness we could most depend.

The accompanying qualities in my uncle's character to his kindness were his justice and integrity. No debt of his was ever knowingly left unpaid. Even the return he made for his taxes was often larger than that of most of his neighbors, because he scrupulously returned an accurate account of his possessions to the assessors. He would not have retained in his possession the smallest sum which he thought to justly belong to another.

And this honesty showed itself quite as much in relations to public affairs as to his own. He was honest even about his time. While he was President, his time was given most scrupulously to his work. He entered his office at nine o'clock in the morning and remained there until four o'clock, when he would take a walk before dinner, which was at five o'clock. After dinner he generally spent a large part of the evening attending to business; and this was the case not for some months of the year only, but for the *whole* year. Except while he was making a short trip into North Carolina and during a visit of about two weeks each year at Bedford Springs, which was necessary to his health, he remained at his post for the four entire years. I remember hearing some members of his cabinet say that he loved work for work's sake. I do not know whether this was the case or not, but certain it is that he did a great deal of work. He always went over carefully, himself, every matter presented to him by his cabinet officers, and tried to possess himself with all the ins and outs of what was going on under his administration.

It surprises me very much to read insinuations to the effect that he was not *the* President. I knew quite intimately nearly all the members of his cabinet, and heard a good deal of their conversation, and I know with what respect they spoke of him, and that the whole tone of their conversation was that he was the master.

There was a peculiarity of his mind which may possibly account to some extent for this mistaken impression. It very often happened that when some new idea or proposition was suggested to him, he would, at the first blush, entirely disapprove of it, so that any one not well acquainted with him, might think the case was hopeless. When he had time, however, to think about it, and if some one would quietly give him the points of the case, and draw his attention more particularly to it, he would sometimes make up his mind in quite an opposite way from that which he had at first intended. After, however, he had once definitely and positively come to a decision, he was unchangeable. What he considered to be right he did, and no fear of consequences could alter his purpose. And the value of this quality to him will be understood when we remember that after his return home from Washington he did not seem to regret his course while there. I never heard him say that he wished he had acted differently in the troublous times through which he had passed. He knew that the steps he had taken had been with the single earnest aim and desire of preserving the country from disunion and war; and that being the case, his having failed in his endeavor did not trouble his conscience at all. "I acted for some time as a breakwater," he said, "between the North and the South, both surging with all their force against me."

I say did not touch his *conscience*. His *heart* was greatly distressed. I remember the morning on which the news came of the ships being sent to the relief of Fort Sumter. "I fear Governor Chase is bringing war upon his country," was his sad exclamation, and from that time until peace was declared, his true and loyal heart grieved over the distress and misery of his country.

I remember an incident early in his administration, which shows his integrity in the matter of his duty. A young man was sentenced to be hung in Washington for murder, who had, for some reason, enlisted great interest for himself among members of his church (Roman Catholic), and not only the mother of the condemned man, but several clergymen and Sisters of Charity, also, waited upon my uncle to importune him for a pardon. My uncle's feelings were greatly enlisted, and I heard him say that he had gone over the case three times, in order that, if possible, he might find some reason that would make it right to grant a pardon. But finding, as he did at last, that there absolutely was no such reason, he said the law must have its way, and the young man was executed.

Another great characteristic of my uncle was his independence of spirit. He would not be under obligation, for gifts, to any one while he was in office, and in fact he did not like to be so at any time. I remember the ——'s were very anxious to present a grand piano to my cousin, soon after she went to Washington, but my uncle positively declined allowing her to accept it. When the Japanese commissioners came, bringing with them curious and costly gifts, some of which were intended for the President, he sent them all to the Patent Office, as the property of the country. He even went so far as to insist, at all times, upon paying his fare whenever he travelled, never receiving a pass,

even when he was out of office. He would have been horrified at the idea of travelling free while he was President. I have often heard him say, "I will pay my way while I can afford it. When I cannot afford to pay I will stay at home." The salary of the President during my uncle's administration was \$25,000. So far from being made any richer by his office, he was obliged to supplement some of his own private means each year, in order that the becoming hospitality and mode of living might be kept up at the White House.

As long as I can remember my uncle, he was a religious man, becoming more and more so as his life drew near its close. His knowledge of the scriptures was very thorough, and whatever doubts he may have had in his earlier life, had been dissipated by the rays of the Sun of Righteousness. He was, certainly, during the latter years of his life, a strong and firm believer in Jesus Christ as his Saviour. It was his constant habit, after his return from Washington, to read daily in the New Testament, and a large part of Sunday he spent in studying that and books founded upon its teachings. A devotional book, Jay's Morning and Evening Exercises, was his constant companion, and he read a great deal in the sermons of the great French preacher, Massillon, a French copy of which he had and often quoted. He conversed much about the Gospel and its teachings, and one could easily tell that he was deeply interested in the subject.

It was his practice, during all his life, to attend church on Sunday morning, and some effect of his early teaching, which very strongly inculcated the hallowing of the Lord's day, was shown when he was in St. Petersburg. It was the custom there for even the most devout, after they had attended service through the day, to go to balls and festivities in the evening of Sunday. My uncle thought that he could not be excused from attending the Emperor's balls, but made it a rule never to dance on Sunday evening, and so caused great surprise to some of his friends there, especially when he explained to them that in America the manner prevalent in Russia of spending Sunday evening would be thought quite shocking.

To show how my uncle respected the religious sense of the community, I will mention, that when the Prince of Wales was visiting him in Washington, and when a large company had been invited to do the Prince honor, my uncle would not consent to having any dancing at it. He took this position, not that he disapproved himself of dancing, but he thought that it would cause scandal to the religious people of the country if there were to be a dance there in the White House. "I am the servant of the people," was his motto, and with this feeling in his mind he toiled, he lived and acted, always trying to prevent anything from being done which would give offence to that people.

I remember dining with him, in company with a lady who seemed to be a thoroughly worldly woman, one whose life had been spent in public and among worldly people. I do not remember the whole conversation, or how my uncle came to say it, but I remember his remark, "I say my prayers every day of my life." The lady looked up at him in surprise, and questioned, thinking he was



jesting. "No," said my uncle, "I am not jesting, I have always said my prayers." I will only add, while on this subject, that not only did my uncle attend church constantly on Sundays, but he was very particular to omit his ordinary avocations, and to make it a day of rest, through all his life.

There was one thing very noticeable in my uncle's conversation during those years which he spent at Wheatland, after his return from Washington. He conversed very little on the political matters of the day, and, particularly, he showed remarkably little bitterness towards those whose indifference and even hatred towards himself showed themselves so strongly when power and influence had passed out of his hands. Occasionally, certainly, he could not help speaking his mind about one or two particularly flagrant cases, but as a general thing he passed over their conduct in silence. He was not fond of picking people to pieces, and his inclination was rather to speak and think kindly of his neighbors.

My uncle was quite stout, although not at all overgrown, and you could not see him without observing that he was a person of distinction. Although he was of so stout a build his foot was rather small, and I often noticed how lightly and quickly he walked. He was very quick of apprehension, and there was very little going on around that he did not know and understand. He has told me that when he was in his prime his hearing was so acute that he could often hear whispering in the adjoining room, and he very often heard things not intended for him to hear.

Owing to a difference which there was between his eyes, one being near and the other far-sighted, he held his head to one side, particularly when looking at any person or thing. When listening to any one he would hold his head in this way, close one eye and gaze very steadily, and so conveyed the impression that he was looking the speaker through and through. I have heard him say that he did not know until he was forty or fifty years of age the cause of this habit. Some friend walking with him suggested to him to try his eyes and see if he could not see better, at a distance, with one than with the other, when, to his surprise, he discovered that with one eye he could not distinguish the landscape at all, while with the other he could see very far. Whether this peculiarity was the cause of his long continued sight I do not know, but the fact is that up to the time of his death he was able to read everything without the aid of glasses. He found, however, during the last year of his life, or perhaps a little longer, that when he read fine print at night, which he often wished to do, it strained his eyes, and for these occasions he procured a pair of spectacles, but he never used them at any other time.

He had a very peculiar way of reading at night. No matter how many lights might be in the room he always had a candlestick and candle, which he held before his eyes, and by that means read his paper or book. As he grew older we often felt quite anxious for fear his paper might take fire, and, occasionally, on the next morning a hole would be found burnt in it, but, as far as I can recollect, nothing more serious ever came of his reading in this way.

My uncle was an extensive reader and had a good memory for what he

had read. His reading embraced all classes of literature, and he conversed intelligently on all subjects. He continued to read a great deal after his return to Wheatland, and enjoyed being read to. Near the end of his life, however, he remarked to me one day, "I am tired of reading; I don't seem to care about it any more," and, as if that were the case, he might at that time be often seen sitting without either book or paper, whereas formerly, when not conversing, he was almost always reading.

My uncle's political life had been an unusually long one, and, in consequence, his remembrance of the sayings and doings of the great people of his time was very interesting. I have heard him say that the first President whom he had met was President Monroe, "a gentlemanly man, wearing a blue coat and metal buttons," and after him he had more or less acquaintance with all the Presidents. It was, in great part, on account of this wonderful fund of personal knowledge which he possessed, that his friends urged him to have a book written which should contain, not only the facts of his own life, but also the reminiscences which he was fond of narrating.

He was very fond of ladies' society, and was all his life in the habit of entertaining them at his house. During his different residences in Washington, while in London and St. Petersburg, as well as in Lancaster, he was very hospitable, and greatly enjoyed the society of his friends in his own house. When he finally returned to Wheatland, he saw much less of society than he had ever done before, and, I have no doubt, his life must have seemed very monotonous to him, but he never complained at all, and was remarkably cheerful and happy.

I have written these pages at the request of my father, hoping that some things in them may be of service to Mr. Curtis, in forming an estimate of the character of my uncle. They have no claim whatever to any literary merit, and are only an effort to do some honor to one so truly loved and so deeply mourned. To me, though it would be a great joy to know that men recognized the wisdom and greatness of his actions, it would be of far greater account to have them realize his goodness, nobility, honor, self-sacrifice, courage and honesty. There may, and must, always be a difference of opinion about questions of polity and administration, but the true elements of greatness lie in the soul of man, and are of far higher value than praise and popular estimation, often attained through a turn of Fortune's wheel.

I close this memorial chapter with some extracts from the sermon preached by Dr. Nevin at the funeral of Mr. Buchanan. Dr. Nevin chose for his text the words: "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."

. . . . . In connection with this momentous subject, the occasion on which we are now met together is full of more than ordinary interest and significance, such as may well invest it with the most profound solemnity for all who are here present.

We have before us, and will be called soon to follow to the grave, the mortal remains of James Buchanan, the fifteenth President of the United States; who, after taking an active part in the politics of this great nation for half a century, having filled the highest places of honor and trust in the gift of his country, and having represented her for a long time with prominent distinction in the diplomacy of the civilized world, has now, at the advanced age of almost four score years, been gathered to his fathers, and enrolled on the catalogue of the great and illustrious dead. His name has been famous, not simply through his own merits, but through association, also, with the leading political characters and the leading political interests of the times in which he lived.

He belonged to a generation of eminent statesmen, giants in their day, whose names were once household words in the land, but who, in him as their representative, we can all feel have passed away forever from the drama of our national life. There is something peculiarly affecting in this thought. He was the last link that held us in communication with that buried age; and in parting with Mr. Buchanan, it is as though we were called to part again with Clay, and Webster, and Benton, and Calhoun, and Jackson, and Cass, and the whole political world to which they belonged. Now, more than ever, their age has become to us, in view especially of the late war, like the years before the flood. Then the occasions with which he has been intimately connected, especially in the latter part of his public life, have been of the most momentous, as well as the most difficult and trying character, involving in the end a crisis which amounted to a full revolution for our own country, while it made itself felt, also, as of truly world-historical importance for the age at large.

This is not the place nor the time, of course, to enter into any consideration of Mr. Buchanan's public career, or to pronounce any judgment in particular on the policy of his administration as President of the United States. The time, indeed, has not yet come for a fair and competent historical verdict on this subject, in any quarter. We stand too near the vast and mighty struggle through which we have just passed, and from whose surging billows we have not yet fully escaped, to understand it properly, or to estimate fairly its moral and political merits.

Only this much, in justice to the dead, I may be permitted to say, in the form of two general observations:

In the first place, we have no right to judge Mr. Buchanan's conduct at the beginning of our late civil troubles by the course of events subsequently, when the contingent became actual, and the problematical certain, in many ways, which only the eye of Omniscience could previously foresee. How far this *ex post facto* judgment (cruel and wrongful in history, full as much as *ex post facto* statutes in legislation), has been carried in the case before us, all who care to look into the matter can easily see and know. Every man, every

public man especially, has a right to demand that his opinions and actions should be measured by the circumstances and conditions of his own time, and not by the circumstances and conditions of another and, it may be, a wholly different time. Any other mode of judgment is at once grossly unhistorical, grossly unphilosophical, and I will also add, grossly unchristian.

My other observation is, that whatever may be thought by others, now or hereafter, of Mr. Buchanan's Presidential administration on the eve of the rebellion, he himself never changed his mind in regard to the righteousness or wisdom of the course which he saw proper to pursue. That his own policy was thwarted and overwhelmed by another policy, altogether different, never led him to believe that, in the circumstances of the country, as they then were, his own policy was not right. "Had I to pass through the same state of things again," he would say, calmly but firmly, "I do not see, before God, how I could act otherwise than as I did act."

This, of course, does not prove that his course was the wisest and best for the exigencies of that fearfully volcanic time, as they came to view afterwards in the lava flames of our civil war; but no one who was intimately familiar, as I have been, with the last years of Mr. Buchanan's life, could doubt, at all events, the sincerity of his own convictions, thus expressed in regard to the closing portions of his political career.\* Whether absolutely wise or not in all his counsels, he was, in this time that tried men's souls, honest, at least, conscientious and patriotically true to what he conceived to be the highest interests of his country.

But these political surroundings of the present solemnity, however they must unavoidably crowd upon our thoughts while we are engaged in it, form not, by any means, what we should all feel to be, for us now, its main interest. The relations of time, however otherwise vast and momentous, are here to-day, swallowed up and made small by the relations of eternity. Mr. Buchanan has passed away, not simply as a politician and a statesman, but as a Christian; and this it is we now feel, standing by his coffin and his grave, to be a distinction of infinitely higher account than all the honors and dignities of his life, under any other form.

These, at best, are but of ephemeral significance and worth. One generation of politicians passeth away and another generation cometh. Where are the voices that, thirty or forty years ago, filled our Congressional halls and electrified the land with their eloquent words? Kings and Presidents, the princes of the earth—terrestrial gods, as they are sometimes called—die like other men. "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass; the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away, but the word

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\* Only a few days before his death, in a conversation with Mr. Swarr, when the hope was expressed that he might still live to see his public life vindicated, he spoke on this subject as follows: "My dear friend, I have no fear of the future. Posterity will do me justice. I have always felt, and still feel, that I discharged every duty imposed on me conscientiously. I have no regret for any public act of my life; and history will vindicate my memory from every unjust aspersion."

of the Lord endureth forever." And where do we find this enduring word of the Lord in full presence and power, save in the Logos Incarnate, our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Alpha and Omega of the whole creation, the same yesterday, to-day and forever?

"Happily, the venerable sage of Wheatland, as he has sometimes been called, sought and found here what he himself was ready to acknowledge as something better than all the greatness of the world; an humble but strong trust in the atoning righteousness of Christ, which brightened the whole evening of his life, which proved to be the strength of his spirit, when heart and flesh began to fail, and which now makes his death but the quiet sleep that precedes the morning of the resurrection. He died in the Lord; this is our great comfort in following him to the grave. We sorrow not as those who have no hope. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."

In some sense, Mr. Buchanan was a religious man, we may say, all his life. Brought into the Presbyterian church by baptism in his infancy, he enjoyed at the same time the unspeakable advantage of an early Christian training, which made itself felt more or less sensibly on all his character and conduct in later years. In serious conversation with me on this subject less than a year ago, he referred, with moistened eyes and faltering voice, to the lessons that had been instilled into him as a boy, especially by his pious mother. She had taught him to pray; and her presence, as an invisible ministering spirit, seemed to hold him to the duty, as it were in spite of himself, through the whole of his subsequent public life. Whatever of worldliness there might be in his thoughts and ways otherwise, his conscience would not allow him to give up the outward exercise, at least, of some private as well as public, forms of devotion. He made it a point to read the bible, honored the Sabbath, and observed more or less faithfully stated times for secret prayer.

His general character, at the same time, was always good. Those who stood nearest to him in his public life, and who knew him best, have ever united in bearing the most favorable testimony to what he was in this view. He has been known and spoken of on all sides as a true gentleman of the old school, distinguished for his personal integrity, a man of honorable spirit, upright in his deportment, and beyond the common measure virtuous in his manners. He was unquestionably one of the purest in mind, and most exemplary in life, belonging to the generation of public men, which has now come to a close in his death. It is, indeed, something wonderful, that in his peculiar circumstances he should have been able to pass through such a long life of exposure to all forms of corruption and sin, so generally unscathed as he seems to have been by the fiery ordeal. In this respect, he is worthy of lasting admiration, and may well be held up as an example for the study and imitation of younger candidates for political distinction coming after his day. When will all our public men lay to heart, as they ought, that true oracle of the olden time: "The memory of the just is blessed; but the name of the wicked shall rot?"

All this, however, Mr. Buchanan himself very well knew, fell short of what was required to make him a Christian in the full sense of the term; and as he advanced in life accordingly, he seems to have turned his mind more and more seriously to the necessity of becoming a follower of the Saviour in a more inward and strict way. This practical discipleship he believed himself to have reached in some measure years before he withdrew from political life. Yet, he made then no open profession of his faith, in the way of what is commonly called joining the church, under the idea that there was some reason for postponing it in the peculiar circumstances in which he stood as a public man. That idea, of course, was a serious mistake, as he himself acknowledged it to be afterwards, when earnestly spoken with on the subject. He ought to have joined the church sooner, he said, and especially before he left Washington. As it was, he took this important step in due course of time, subsequently, after full serious consideration, by connecting himself in form with the Presbyterian church of Lancaster, which had been his regular place of worship previously, where he continued to worship afterwards, and in communion with which he has now departed this life, "looking for the general resurrection in the last day, and the life of the world to come."

It was my privilege to converse with him frequently on religious subjects, during these his last years, and I can say his mind seemed to be always clear and remarkably firm, as well as consistent, in the apprehension of Christianity, under its simplest and most commonly acknowledged evangelical form. He had studied carefully, I may be allowed to state, the Heidelberg Catechism (that most œcumenical, and in some respects most genial of all the Reformed Protestant Confessions), and he was accustomed to speak highly of it at all times, as being a summary of religious truth, to which he could cordially subscribe as the full expression of his theological faith.\*

More particularly, however, it was during the last summer, that I had the opportunity of coming to the most intimate knowledge of his Christian views and hopes, on the occasion of his returning home from Cape May, under an attack of a strange sickness which threatened at the time to carry him to the grave. The sickness was attended with but little bodily pain, and it left his mind perfectly clear and free, while yet it was of such a character as to produce in his own mind the strong impression that it would end in his death. In these solemn circumstances, I had interviews with him day after day for some time, in which I talked with him, and prayed with him, as a dying man; and in which he talked also most freely himself with regard to his own condition, giving utterance to his views and feelings in a way which furnished the most satisfactory and pleasing evidence that religion had become with him,

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\* Conversing with his executor and friend, Mr. Swarr, in regard to his decease, a short time before it took place, he took occasion to say, in the way of dying testimony: "The principles of the Christian religion were instilled into my mind in my youth; and from all I have observed and experienced in the long life Providence has vouchsafed to me, I have only become more strengthened in the conviction of the Divine character of the Saviour, and the power of atonement through His redeeming grace and mercy."

indeed, a deeply-settled principle in the soul, and such a conviction of faith as could not be shaken by the powers either of earth or hell. Let it be sufficient here to say, that he was able to resign himself with full filial confidence and trust into the hands of God as a faithful Creator and Saviour, and that he found Him an all sufficient help in his time of need. At the same time, his faith was far more than a vague trust merely in God's general goodness and mercy. It was most explicitly the humble, penitent reliance of one who knew himself to be a sinner, on the mercy of God secured to men through His Son Jesus Christ. At this time, especially, more than before, he was brought to see and feel the importance of simply looking to Jesus (in the spirit of St. John's gospel and of the Apostle's Creed), as being Himself the sum and substance of the whole Christian salvation. His mind fastened with peculiar interest on the text: "Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ the Son of the living God."\*

Altogether it was a death-bed experience, full of tranquil light and peace, the calm evening sunset of a long life, which seemed to be itself but the brightening promise of a new and far better life beyond the grave.

His late sickness, which has now terminated in his death, was more prostrating for him throughout, both in body and in mind, than that of which I have just spoken. Through it all, however, his views and feelings in regard to religion he declared to be, in the prospect of quitting the world, just what he had over and over again witnessed them to be before. He bowed with entire submission to his Heavenly Father's will. His last intelligible word, indeed, whispered in the ear of anxious affection bending over him, as he was turned somewhat painfully upon his bed, and felt, no doubt, that the end had come—after which he fell away into the gentle sleep that some hours later

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\* These pastoral conferences—*horæ vespertinæ* they might be called, held as they were mostly in the autumnal twilight, on what seemed to be for us the utmost verge of time—were peculiarly interesting and solemn to myself, as they were always most cordially welcomed also by Mr. Buchanan. There was no reserve or hesitation in his manner. His habitual diplomatic caution was gone. At the same time there was no excitement or agitation in his mind. He was perfectly calm, and had no fear of death whatever. Still it was full before him, and he had no disposition to hide from himself its awful presence. He wished to be talked with as a man who felt himself to be on the borders of the eternal world, and who was fully awake to the dread issues of the life to come. But with all this, his spirit abode in quiet confidence and peace, and the ground of his trust throughout was the mercy of God through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. There was nothing like enthusiasm, of course, in his experience; the general nature of the man made that impossible. His religion showed itself rather in the form of fixed trust in God, thankfulness for His past mercy, and general resignation to His holy will. In these twilight hours, thus circumstanced, it could not be but that central regard was had continually to the person of Jesus Christ, and the significance of the Christian redemption as comprehended in the idea of His coming in the flesh. This Christological way of looking at the gospel was in some measure new to Mr. Buchanan, or at least it had not taken hold of his mind, as he confessed, in the same manner before. Now, however, it gave him great satisfaction, and he considered it one special benefit of his sickness, that it had taught him to see in the simple exercise of "looking to Jesus" what he found to be, for himself, at least, the most consoling and the most strengthening practice of Christian faith.

closed the scene—was the short Christian prayer: “O Lord, God Almighty, as Thou wilt!” Thus he passed away. His trust was in Christ crucified and risen from the dead, and in Christ alone. He died in the full faith of the gospel, and in the joyful hope of having part at last in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.

He sleeps in Jesus. Be this his epitaph; the last and crowning honor of his long, illustrious life; the richest ornament of his public, no less than of his private memory and name. Be this also the consolation of his sorrowful friends as they look upon that venerable majestic form here lying in state before us, and are called now to follow it in slow melancholy procession to the grave. We sorrow not as others, which have no hope; for if Jesus died and rose again, them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. The aged statesman has been gathered to his fathers full of years, like a shock of corn fully ripe and laden with fruit; he has served his country well, and enjoyed its honors largely, in his generation; he has left behind him a fair example of justice, benevolence, integrity and truth, a bright record indeed, of honorable and virtuous character in all respects. In all this we find matter for thankful satisfaction, and occasion for bowing in meek submission to the Divine will, which has now at last removed him from our sight. But, through all this, at the same time, we triumph and rejoice most of all, as Christians, in what we know to have been his Christian death, and in the assurance that we have, therefore, of his being still with us, and near to us, in Christ.

To Whom, now let us offer our united and unfeigned thanks for that victory over death and the grave, which he has obtained for us and for all who sleep in Him; while we pray also for power to follow the faith of those who have gone before us, “that we may enter at death into their joy, and so abide with them in rest and peace, till both they and we shall reach our common consummation of redemption and bliss in the glorious resurrection of the last day.”  
*Amen.*

The remains of James Buchanan lie in a beautiful rural cemetery near the city of Lancaster, beneath a simple monument, which records only the date of his birth and of his death, and the fact that he was the fifteenth President of the United States. It is well that the soil of Pennsylvania holds his ashes, for he was the most eminent statesman yet given by that great commonwealth to the service of the country since the Constitution of the United States was established.



# INDEX.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>ABERDEEN, LORD, Course of, on Oregon question, i, 568; Is informed by Mr. McLane of Mr. Buchanan's despatch on Oregon Question, 558; Gives information that Oregon treaty is approved, 604.</p> <p>ABERDEEN LORD, Premier, ii., 104; Ministry of ii 105-107</p> | <p>ANDERSON, MAJOR, Removal of, from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter, ii., 365, 370; Temporary truce of, 449 et seq.; Extraordinary despatches from, 497; Letter of, to General Dix, 496, 518.</p> <p>ANNE, EMPRESS, of Russia, i., 204.</p> |
|--|---|

## ERRATA.

- Vol. II., page 106. For "unprecedented," read "very unusual."  
 " page 170. For "S. M. Barlow," read "S. L. M. Barlow."

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>administration of, 511, 394; Referred to by Mr. R. P. Letcher, 514; On secession, ii., 603.</p> <p>AIX-LA-CHAPELLE, i., 219.</p> <p>ALABAMA, Secession of, ii., 42.</p> <p>ALBERT, PRINCE, of Prussia, i., 207.</p> <p>ALBERT, PRINCE, ii., 112.</p> <p>ALEXANDER, EMPEROR, of Russia, i., 155, 221.</p> <p>ALFONSKOI, Russian physician, i., 195, 196, 198.</p> <p>ALLEN WILLIAM, U. S. Senator, reference to, on Texas question, i, 519; ii., 195, note.</p> <p>AMERICA, CENTRAL, Negotiations with Lord Clarendon concerning, ii., 126 et seq.</p> <p>AMERICAN INSTITUTE, i., 201.</p> <p>AMERICAN SYSTEM, Mr. Buchanan's views of, i., 76.</p> | <p>ASHBURTON, LORD, i., 504.</p> <p>ASSUMPTION, Cathedral of, i., 199.</p> <p>ATHERTON, CHAS. G., i., 519.</p> <p>ARTHUR, PRINCE, Son of Princess Lieven, i., 217.</p> <p>AUTHOR, Refutation a duty of the, ii., 511, 517.</p> <p>BAKER, J. B., Letter to, ii., 622.</p> <p>BAKER, MRS. GEO. W., Niece of Mr. Buchanan, i., 531, note; Death of, ii., 159.</p> <p>BALDWIN, MR. JUSTICE, Death of, i., 561, 26.</p> <p>BALTIMORE LADIES, Spirit of, in 1863, ii., 612.</p> <p>BANCROFT, GEO., Letter of, to Mr. Buchanan, i., 590; Mission to England, 574, 575.</p> <p>BANK OF THE UNITED STATES, i.,</p> |
|---|---|

- 184; Mr. Buchanan an early opponent of, 15.
- BANK QUESTION**, Retrospective view of, i., 411-416.
- BANKRUPT ACT of 1841**, Mr. Buchanan's speech on, i., 461.
- BANKRUPTCY**, Meaning of, under the constitution, i., 30.
- BANKRUPTCY BILL**, Discussion on, in 1821-22, i., 31.
- BARBOUR**, GOV. JAMES, of Virginia, i., 606.
- BARBOUR**, PHILIP P., i., 26.
- BARGAIN AND CORRUPTION**, i., 41, 56; Unfounded charges of, 43; Mr. Buchanan's course in regard to, 41, 56; Revival of, i., 506.
- BARLOW**, S. L. M., MR. (of New York), quoted, i., 22, note; Account by, of proceedings of Cincinnati Convention, ii., 170 et seq.
- BARNWELL**, ROBERT W., Commissioner from South Carolina, ii., 370.
- BASHNIA SOUCHAROVA**, i., 196.
- BATES**, JOSHUA, Partner of Baring Bros. & Co., i., 226, and note.
- BEALE WILLIAM**, State Senator, i., 10.
- BELL**, MR., Senator from Tennessee, ii., 195, note.
- BENTON**, THOMAS H., Opposed to administration of John Q. Adams, i., 58; Politics of, 232; Resolutions of, on surplus money, 243; Resolutions of, in relation to defence of U. S., in case of war with France, 268; Expunging resolution of, 291, 293, 294, 305, 306; Antipathy of, to paper currency, 496; Subject of vituperation by his party, 510; Hue and cry against, 512; Pretensions of, to Presidency, 517; References to, 519, 528; Conduct and speech of, on Oregon question, 559; Course of, on Oregon question, 570; Reference to, 612.
- BERNARD**, GENERAL, Reference to, as favoring General Jackson's election, i., 55.
- BERNSDOFF**, COUNTESS, ii., 159.
- BERRIEN**, J. MACPHERSON, Reference to, i., 545.
- BEVERLY**, CARTER, Conversation of, with General Jackson on incidents preceding the election of Mr. Adams, i., 49; Visit of, to General Jackson, 49.
- BIGLER**, MR., U. S. Senator, Note of, to President, ii., 465.
- BILLS IN CONGRESS**, Conscription, 1815, i., 9; Bill for relief of surviving officers of revolution, 58; Panama appropriation, 67; Alteration of tariff, 75; Cumberland Road, 81; To amend and extend judicial system, 95; To repeal 25th section of judiciary act, 110; Fortification Bill, 240; Removal of executive officers, 281; Removal of the public deposits from the Bank of the United States, 291; To restrain use of mails for the circulation of incendiary publications, 338; To accept services of volunteers for defence of frontiers, 368; To prevent interference of Federal officers with elections, 378; For the renewal of the charter of United States Bank, 413; To rescind the Specie Circular, 417; To authorize issue of Treasury notes, 422; To prevent Pennsylvania Bank from reissuing and circulating notes of old bank, 423; For a bank with power to establish offices of discount, 459; To create a Fiscal Corporation of the United States, 459; Bankrupt Act, 461.
- BIRNEY**, JAMES G., Anti-slavery candidate for Presidency, i., 543.
- BLACK**, JEREMIAH S., ATTORNEY GENERAL, ii., 194; Letter of, 309; Opinion of, 319; Objects to the answer of President Buchanan to commissioners, 379; Fears of, in regard to inauguration of Lincoln, 491, 514; Letter of, to Mr. Schell, 519; Letter of, to Mr. Buchanan, 562.
- BLAKE**, DR., Letters to, ii., 601, 614.
- BLAKE**, JOHN B., Letters of, to Mr. Buchanan, ii., 524, 525.
- BLIGH**, MR., British Minister at Russian court, i., 150; Accompanies Mr. Buchanan as far as Cronstadt, 217.

- BONAPARTE, NAPOLEON, References to, i., 198, 222.
- BORGO, COUNT POZZO DI, Conversation with Mr. Buchanan, i., 175; Called on by Mr. Buchanan, 220; Mr. Buchanan dines with, 222; Reference to conversations with, by Mr. Buchanan, 234.
- BRANCH, MR., ii., 491.
- BRECKINRIDGE, MR., Candidate for Vice Presidency, ii., 177; Nominated by Southern Democratic Convention, 288.
- BRIGHT, JESSE D., Senator from Indiana, ii., 360.
- BROGLIE, DUC DE, Visited by Mr. Buchanan, i., 221; Conversation of, with Mr. Buchanan in 1833, 234; Reference to his note to Mr. Barton, 239; His assurance to Mr. Livingston, 252; Conduct of, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, 271; Letter to, by Mr. Livingston, 273; Famous letter of, to Chargé at Washington, 274; Letter of, to M. Pageot, 279.
- BROWN, AARON V., Postmaster General, ii., 194.
- BROWN, JAMES, Senator in Congress from Louisiana when Mr. Buchanan entered that body, i., 25.
- BROWN, SIR WILLIAM, Mr. Buchanan dines with, at his country house, i., 137, 138 and note.
- BRUNNOW, BARON DE, Reference to request of, i., 167.
- BUCHANAN, Family of, Scotch-Irish, i., 1, 3.
- BUCHANAN, MISS ANNIE, On Mr. Buchanan's character and last days, ii., 674 et seq.
- BUCHANAN, GEO. W., Brother of the President, i., 3; Letter of, to his brother James, 109.
- BUCHANAN, JOHN, Grandfather of the President, i., 3.
- BUCHANAN, MRS., Mother of the President, Letter of, to her son James, i., 134; Death of, 209, note.
- BUCHANAN, JAMES, Father of the President, i., 1; Letters of, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.
- BUCHANAN, JAMES, the President, His autobiographical sketch, i., 1 et seq.; Birth of, 4; Education, 4; College career, 4, 6; Admitted to the bar, 7; A Federalist in politics, 8; Volunteers in the War of 1812, 8; On defence of the country, 8, 10; Oration of, on July 4th, 1815, 12; Elected to the legislature, 8; Re-elected to the legislature, 14; Counsel for an impeached Judge, 16; Rising to eminence as a lawyer, 17; Suffers a great disappointment in love, 17 et seq.; Elected to Congress, 23; First debate of, relative to military establishment, 30; Speech on tariff of, 1823-4, 36; Professional income, 37; Scandals as to supposed agency of, for Mr. Clay, 40; Action of, in regard to, 41; First acquaintance with General Jackson and Mr. Clay, 41; Interview with General Jackson at Seven Buildings, 42; Letter of, to General Jackson, 44; Integrity of, 51; Letters of, to Mr. Ingham, 51, 54; Letter of, to General Jackson, 55; Opposition of, to administration of John Q. Adams, 58; Speech of, in support of bill for relief of officers of Revolution, 59; Speech of, on Panama Mission, 65; Remarks on slavery, 68; Opposes Mr. Chilton's resolution on abolition of offices, 71; Replies to Mr. Everett, 72; Powers as a debater, 74; Views of, on tariff, 74; Speech on tariff, 74; Replies to Mr. Sprague on tariff, 75; Views on subject of navy, 78; Opposition of, to administration, how carried on, 80; Speech of, on appropriation for surveys, 80; Course of, on Cumberland Road, 81; Speech on Cumberland Road, 82; Speech of, against second election to Presidency, 92; Action of, in election of General Jackson, 94; Report of, on judicial system, 95; Chairman of judiciary committee, 95; Re-election of, to Congress in 1828, 95; Speech of, on judiciary act, 95; Supports bill on judiciary system, 99, 100; Favors increase of Supreme Court Judges, 104; Views

on judicial appointments, 195; Report of, on recommendation of judiciary committee, 107; Trial of Judge Peck, 108; Speech as a manager of the impeachment, 108; Letter from his brother George, 109; Remarks on twenty-fifth section of judiciary act, 113; Spoken of as candidate for Vice Presidency, 122; Letter of, to George Plitt, 122; Qualifications of, for great success at bar, 123; Letters from his brother George, 124, 125, 126; Letters of, to Mr. Eaton, 130, 131; Letter of, to General Jackson, 134; Letter of, to his brother Edward, 138; Diary of, on journey from Lancaster to Europe, 136; From London to St. Petersburg, 140; Letter of, to General Jackson, 142; Letter of, to his brother Edward, 144; Letter of, to John B. Sterigere, 146; Letter of, to his brother Edward, 147; Letter of, to General Jackson, 149; Letter of, to his brother Edward, 152; Letter of, to Mrs. Slaymaker, 154; Letter from his mother, 158, note; Letter of, to his brother Edward, 159; Letter of, to General Jackson, 164; Interview with Count Nesselrode, on commercial treaty, 165; Despatch of, to Secretary of State at Washington, 167; Commercial treaty, summary of, by, 168; Letter of, to General Jackson, on maritime treaty, 174; Failure of the latter, 174; Despatch of, to Secretary of State, 176; Letter of, to Secretary of State at Washington, 181; Letter of, to Mr. Sterigere, 189; Journey of, to Moscow, 192; Arrives at home, 227; Elected to the Senate, 228; Senator's duties, 230, note; Remarks of, on relations with France, 236; Reply of, to Mr. Clay, in relation to France, 238; Remarks of, on President's message in regard to France, 238; Position of, in relation to France, 236; Vindicates an amendment to fortification bill, 241; Surplus revenue, remarks on resolution of Mr. Benton concerning, 243; Speech of, on power

of removal by the President, 282; Speech of, on expunging resolution, 293; Views of, on censure of President by Senate, 292; Course of, as to slavery, 315; Remarks on slavery, 316; Remarks on reception of Quaker memorial, 319 et seq.; Presents a petition from Society of Friends, 337; Remarks of, on bill to restrain circulation of incendiary publications, 340 et seq.; Remarks of, in favor of admission of Michigan, 358; Remarks of, on bill for services of volunteers for defence of frontiers, 368; Speech of, on interference of Federal officers with elections, 378 et seq.; Speech of, in support of bill against Pennsylvania Bank, 423; Relations of, to political warfare on the currency question, 449 et seq.; Letters of, 452-457; On the administration of President Tyler, 459; Reply of, to Mr. Clay on veto power, 460, 472 et seq.; Opposes bankrupt law of 1841, 461 et seq.; Describes the Exchequer Board, 471; Opposes ratification of treaty with England, 504; Reference to conversation of, in 1825, 507; Letters of, 509, 511; Third election of, to the Senate, 515; Proposed nomination of, for Presidency, 516; Withdraws from canvass, 517; Letters of, 518, 519, 523, 524 et seq.; Domestic and social life of, 531; Letters of, to Miss Lane, 533; Domestic circle of, 534; Private fortune of, 535, note; Letters of, to Miss Lane, 536 et seq.; Remarks of, on annexation of Texas, 545; Becomes Secretary of State, 547; Interviews with Mr. Pakenham at State Department, 555; Despatch of, to Mr. McLane, 558; Letters of, 559, 574; Despatch of, to Mr. King, on Texas question, 584; Action of, in regard to Texas, 585, 586; Despatch to Mr. Slidell on Mexican question, 595; Further instructs Mr. Slidell, 596; Position of, as to Presidency, ii., 8; Reference to, 9; Letters of, to his niece, 11 et seq.; Supports compromise measures, 11;

Letter of, to Central Southern Rights Association of Virginia, 23; Letter of, to Shelton F. Leake and others, 24; Letter of, to John Nelson, William F. Giles, etc., 26; Address of, to citizens of Philadelphia, 28; Candidate for nomination, 34; Letters of, 39, 40, 41, 42; Speech of, at Greensburgh, Penn., in 1852, 43 et seq.; Offered mission to England by President Pierce, 76; Conversation of, with Mr. Pierce on English mission, 76 et seq.; Letters of, to President Pierce, 69, 83 et seq.; Declines a farewell dinner in Lancaster, 93; Letters to Miss Lane, 94 et seq.; Arrives in Liverpool, 99; Visits Lord Clarendon, 100; Conversation of, with Sir Edward Cust, on court etiquette, 107 et seq.; Letters of, to Miss Lane, 109, 112 et seq.; Attends the Queen's first levee of the season, 112; Dines with the Queen, 113; Letters of, to Mr. Marcy, 117 et seq., 119, 121; Letter of, to Mr. Capen, 120; Letters of, to Gov. Bigler and Mr. Marcy, 122, 123; Letter of, to his housekeeper, Miss Hetty Parker, 124; Letter of, to his niece, Mrs. Baker, 124; Social position of, in England, 142; Letters of, to Mrs. Baker and Miss Lane, 148 et seq.; Returns to United States, 169; Nomination of, for the Presidency, 170; Letters of, to Messrs. Wm. B. Reed, James C. Dobbin, Nahum Capen, 178-181; Letter of, on Pacific Railroad, 183; Letter of, on Presidential election, 183; Letter of, on subject of mission, 185; Inauguration of, as President, 187; Inaugural address of, 188 et seq.; Cabinet of, 193; Upholds the Territorial government in Kansas, 197; Results of this action, 198; Position of, as President, in regard to slavery, 202 et seq.; Administration of, 211; Foreign relations of United States during this period, 211 et seq.; Policy of, in regard to Mexico, 219; Messages of, to Congress, Dec., 1859, 220, Dec., 1860, 221; Complimentary gift to, from

Prince Albert, 228; Letters of, to Queen Victoria, 229, 231; Letters of, to Miss Lane, 240 et seq.; Protest against action of House of Representatives, 249 et seq.; Letter of, to Mr. J. G. Bennett, 261; Letter of, to Arnold Plumer on election, 286; Letter of, to C. Comstock, 289; Speech of, from White House, 290; Soundness of views of, on anti-slavery, 295, 296; Course of, in 1860, after Mr. Lincoln's election, 304 et seq.; Letter of, to editors of Lancaster *Intelligencer*, Oct., 1862, 307; Refuses to garrison Southern forts, 307; Reasons of, for not acting upon General Scott's views, 309 et seq.; Letter of, to Attorney General Black, 319; History of annual message of Dec., 1860, 330 et seq.; Message of Dec., 1860, 337 et seq.; Reception of message in cabinet, Congress and country, 352; Account by, of General Scott's second recommendation, 367; Letter of, to Governor Pickens, of South Carolina, 368; Interview of, with South Carolina commissioners, 372, 377; Result of interview, 374; Remarks of, at Wheatland, 375; Orders of, to General Anderson, 375; Reference to conversation of, with General Jackson, 381; Draft of proposed answer to commissioners, 384; Modified by Judge Black, 386; Letter of, to General Cass, 398; Memorandum of, on resignation of General Cass, 399; Action of Congress on annual message, 418 et seq.; Letter of, to James Gordon Bennett, 431; Special message of, to Congress, 433 et seq.; Course of, reviewed, 444 et seq.; Attacked by Jefferson Davis, 444; Interview of, with Senator Clay, of Alabama, 452 et seq.; Letters of, to Mr. Tyler, 466, 467; His account of an interview with, 468; Message of, of Jan. 28th, 1861, quoted, 473; His action in regard to Fort Sumter 474; Note of, to Mr. Holt, 474; Conference of, with General Scott and Mr. Holt, 475; His account of the neg-

lects of Congress, 478; No suggestion made by, to Mr. Davis, of Confederate commissioners, 485 et seq.; Special message of, 494; Note of, to Mr. Tyler, 495; Knowledge of, and reverence for, Constitution, 502; Only interview with Mr. Lincoln, 505; Departure of, for Wheatland, 506; Letter of, to Mr. Toucey, 514; Letter of, to Miss Lane, 522; Letter of, to Judge Black, 523; Letter of, to John B. Blake, 524; An interview with, 526; Letters of, to Messrs. Holt and Bennett, 530; Letters of, to General Dix, 535; Letters of, to Mr. J. B. Henry, 541, 548; Letter of, to Mr. J. C. G. Kennedy, 546; Letter of, to General Dix, 542, 544; Letter of, to Mr. Stanton, 545; Letter of, to Mr. Baker, 545; Letter of, to Dr. John B. Blake, 562; Letter of, to Mr. Hallock, 555; Letter of, to Mr. King, 557; Letters of, to Mr. Leiper, 559, 561; Letters of, to Mr. King, 563, 567, 569, 579, 582, 636; Letters of, to Mr. Bates, 565; Letter of, to a committee of the citizens of Lancaster County, etc., 565; Letters of, to J. B. Henry, 566, 578, 598, 601, 657; Letters of, to Miss Lane, 569, 571, 572, 576, 597, 605, 609, 612, 623, 631, 632; Letter of, to Mr. Cobden, 570; Letters of, to Mr. Leiper, 572, 578, 588, 593, 604, 613, 615, 622, 624, 627, 633, 641; Letter of, to Charles Graffin, 651; Letter of, to J. W. Wall, 635; Letter of, to Messrs. Osborne and Baldwin, 652; Letter of, to Rev. P. Coombe, 636; Letter of, to Miss Jane Buchanan, 650; Letters of, to Dr. Blake, 573, 580, 584, 587, 588, 591, 594, 595, 598, 601, 605, 606, 609, 614, 615, 629, 646, 661; Letter of, to Judge Woodward, 577; Letters of, to J. Buchanan Henry, 578, 598, 625; Letter of, to John A. Parker, 579; Letter of, to Miss Boyd, 583; Letter of, to Mr. Stanton, 583; Letter of, to Judge Black, 585; Letters of, to Isaac Toucey, 586, 599, 620, 641; Letters of, to Wm. Flinn, 591, 634, 645; Let-

ter of, to Mr. Hughes, 595; Letter of, to C. E. Bennett, 596; Letters of, to Mr. Capen, 596, 599, 604, 607, 608, 609, 616, 617, 618, 624, 626, 630, 639, 644, 649, 651, 654, 655, 657, 658, 663; Letters of, to Mr. Schell, 610, 617; Letters of, to Mr. Hassard, 627; Letter of, to Mrs. Viele, 619; Letters of, to Mr. J. B. Baker, 611, 622, 633, 644, 655, 658; Letter of, to James Buchanan, 623; Letter of, to Mr. Johnston, 633, 659; Letter of, to editor of *Evening Post*, 637; Letter of, to Horace Greeley, 639; Letter of, to a friend, 641, 645; Letter of, to C. J. Faulkner, 643; Letter of, to Manton Marble, 643; Letters of, to Mrs. Johnston, 645, 648, 649, 653, 656, 660, 662; Letter of, to Miss Henrietta Buchanan, 647; Letter of, to Rev. Ed. Y. Buchanan, 652; Letter of, to Mrs. Shunk, 654, 656; Letter of, to Mr. Schell, 659; Letter of, to Miss Baker, 662; Death of, 664; His character as a statesman, a man and a Christian, 634 et seq.

BUCHANAN, WM. SPEER, Brother of the President, i., 3; Death of, 158.

BULOW, BARON, Dines at Prince Lieven's, i., 224; Dines at Lord Palmerston's, 225.

BURKE, EDMUND, Quoted, i., 302; His use of word "expunge," 310.

BURNETT, MR., From Kentucky, ii., 491.

BURR, AARON, Visits Talleyrand, i., 225.

BUTLER, W. O., Nomination for Vice Presidency, ii., 8.

BUTTRE, JOHN C., Engraver, Referred to, ii., 240.

CABINET, CRISIS, ii., 383, 385; Reconstruction of, 400; Scene in, 518, 521; Letter of Mr. Schell to Judge Black concerning, 518 et seq.; Judge Black's reply, 519, 520; John B. Floyd, 518; Jeremiah S. Black, 519; Remarks of Mr. Stanton, 519; J. Holt, 519; John A. Dix, 519.

- CALDERON, MADAME, Wife of Spanish minister, letter to Mr. Buchanan, i., 618.
- CALHOUN, JOHN C., Secretary of War under President Monroe, i., 24; Vice President, 94; In the Senate, 232; Remarks on relations with France, 239; Illustration referred to, 288; Position towards slavery in District of Columbia, 315; Votes against memorials being received, 319; References to, 322, 333, 341, 343; Reference to a bill of, 345; Report on defence of Western frontiers, 372 et seq.; Secretary of State under President Tyler, 543; Popularity on entering Senate, 559; Political death referred to, 570; Letter to Mr. Buchanan, 576; Plan for bringing Texas into the Union, 581; Reference to, ii., 9; Death of, 10, note; Correct conclusion from doctrines of, 315; Senator from South Carolina, 361.
- CALIFORNIA, Demand to be admitted into the Union, ii., 9.
- CAMBRELENG, CHURCHILL C., Enters House of Representatives with Mr. Buchanan, i., 25.
- CAMIDGE, REV. MATTHEW, Pastor of English chapel in Moscow, i., 199; Dines at Mr. Cavanaugh's, 204.
- CAMPBELL, G. W., Memorial from bar of Nashville, in relation to seventh circuit, i., 96.
- CAMPBELL, JUDGE, ii., 514.
- CANCRENE, COUNT, Minister of Finance at St. Petersburg, opposition to commercial treaties, i., 152, 162, 166, 168.
- CANNING, SIR STRATFORD, Ambassador from England, refused by the Emperor of Russia, i., 216.
- CARLISLE, ii., 607.
- CARLOS, DON, Possible succession to throne of Spain, i., 149.
- CAROLINA, SOUTH, Celebrated ordinance adopted by, in 1832, i., 183; Secession, ii., 316, 319; Commissioners from, arrival in Washington, 367; Ordinance of secession adopted by convention of, 370; Attitude of, 369, 372; Demands of her commissioners, 372, 375; President Buchanan's draft of answer to the commissioners of, 385; The reply which was sent, 386, 392.
- CASS, LEWIS, i., 559, 570; Position in regard to Presidency, ii., 8; Nomination for Presidency, 8; Candidate for nomination, 34; Influence of, 74; Secretary of State, 193; Letter of, 217, note; Resignation of, 396; Letter to President Buchanan, 397.
- CASTLEREAGH, LORD, Reference to, i., 161.
- CATHARINE, EMPRESS of Russia, Character of, i., 154.
- CATHARINE SECOND, Reference to, i., 204.
- CATON, BETSY, Younger sister of Lady Stafford, ii., 102.
- CATRON, MR. JUSTICE, Conversation with President Jackson, i., 235, note; Reference to, 529, note.
- CAVANAUGH, MR., Dinner given by, i., 204.
- CHANNING, REV. WM. E., Quoted, on anti-slavery, ii., 296, and note.
- CHANTRY, LADY, ii., 153.
- CHARLESTON, Democratic convention at, ii., 287.
- CHASE, ORMOND, Fate in Mexico, ii., 218.
- CHASE, WM. H., Commander of State troops in Pensacola, Florida, ii., 461.
- CHATHAM, LORD, Reference to letters of, i., 533.
- CHEVES, LANGDON, i., 26.
- CHICAGO CONVENTION which nominated McClellan, ii., 624.
- CHILTON, MR., Resolutions on curtailing expenses of Government, i., 70.
- CHINA, Relations of United States with, ii., 226; Amendment of treaty with, *ibid*.
- CLARENDON, COUNTESS, Asks for autograph of Gen. Washington, ii., 113.
- CLARENDON, LORD, Foreign Secretary, 104, 116; Action on Clayton-Bulwer treaty, 126, 133, 135, 184.
- CLARKE, JAMES, Candidate for election to Senate in 1834, i., 228.

- CLAY, HENRY, Reference to, i., 26; Candidate for the Presidency in 1824, 38; Course in regard to, 39; Reference to Mr. Buchanan in 1827, 53; Views on subject of protection, 74; Candidate of Whigs for Vice Presidency, 231; Leader of Whig party in 1832, 231; Reference to, 232; Resolution on removal of deposits, 291; References to, 295, 297, 301, 302; Course on slavery, 333; Reference to remarks of, 347; References to, 496, 502, 503, 506; Conversation in Jan., 1825, 507; Secretary of State under J. Q. Adams, 511; His meaning in "carrying the war into Africa," 514; Whig candidate for Presidency, 520; His position in regard to annexation of Texas, 544.
- CLAY, Senator from Alabama, President Buchanan's memorandum of visit from, ii., 452, 454.
- CLAY, J. RANDOLPH, Reference to, i., 558; Letter to, 560.
- CLAYTON-BULWER Treaty, ii., 82; Negotiations with Lord Clarendon concerning, 126, 133; Ambiguity of, 212.
- CLAY, HENRY, Compromise measures of, ii., 10, 47.
- CLAYTON, JOHN M., Senator from Delaware, references to, i., 232, 263; Secretary of State, ii., 9.
- CLAYTON, JOSIUA, ii., 195, note.
- CLINTON, DE WITT, ii., 49.
- COALITION, Description of, i., 38, 39.
- COBB, HOWELL, Secretary of Treasury, ii., 193.
- COBDEN, HON. RICHARD, Letter to Mr. Buchanan, ii., 560.
- COCHRANE, JOHN, From New York, ii., 491.
- COLCOCK, WM. F., United States Collector at Custom House in Charleston, resigns, ii., 483.
- COLEMAN, MISS ANNE C., Betrothed to Mr. Buchanan, ii., 17 et seq.; Their engagement broken off, 17; Sudden and melancholy death of, 17, 22; Lasting sorrow produced by it, 21, 22.
- COLEMAN, ROBERT, Father of Miss Anne C. Coleman, i., 17, 21.
- COLOGNE, Mr. Buchanan visits, i., 219.
- COMMERCIAL TREATY between United States and Russia, when and where signed, i., 169, 170.
- COMPROMISE MEASURES, Supported by Messrs. Webster and Calhoun, ii., 10; Become a law, 11.
- COMPROMISE, The Crittenden, ii., 421.
- CONFEDERATE CONGRESS, First Assembly at Montgomery, ii., 476; Of what States composed, *ibid*.
- CONFERENCE, OSTEND, ii., 136.
- CONGRESS, The fatal inaction of, ii., 420 et seq.
- CONNECTICUT, Memorial to President Buchanan; his reply, ii., 199 et seq.
- CONRAD, CHAS. M., Secretary of War, ii., 11.
- CONSCRIPTION ACT, Constitutionally valid, ii., 610.
- CONSTANTINOPLE, i., 195.
- CONSTITUTION, Nature of the United States, as understood by Mr. Buchanan, i., 283.
- CONVENTION between United States and France, i., 234.
- CONVENTION, The Peace, ii., 439, 445; Mr. Buchanan's account of, 439, 444.
- CORRUPT COALITION, Charge of, between Adams and Clay, i., 44.
- CORWIN, THOMAS, Secretary of Treasury, ii., 11.
- COURT COSTUMES, Mr. Buchanan's course in regard to, ii., 110, 116.
- COVE GAP, President Buchanan's birthplace, i., 2.
- COVODE INVESTIGATION, Account of, ii., 246 et seq.; Mr. Buchanan's message on, 254, 260.
- CRAMPTON, MR., British minister, ii., 81; Recall demanded by the United States, 134.
- CRANWORTH, LORD, Lord Chancellor, ii., 104.
- CRAWFORD, JOHN, Candidate at Presidential election in 1824, i., 38, 45.
- CRAWFORD, MR., Commissioner from Confederate States, ii., 486; Repre-



- sentations of Mr. Buchanan by, 487.
- CRITTENDEN COMPROMISE, History and rejection of, ii., 420 et seq.
- CRITTENDEN, JOHN J., Senator from Kentucky, i., 378, 379; Attorney General, ii., 11.
- CRONSTADT, Mr. Buchanan visits, i., 217.
- CUMBERLAND ROAD, Bill for, discussion of, i., 32, 33; Historical Sketch of, 82, 83.
- CUSHING, CALEB, ii., 78, 80; Visit to Charleston, 368; Letter delivered by, 368.
- CUST, SIR EDWARD, Interview with Mr. Buchanan, ii., 111.
- CUTHBERT, ALFRED, Senator from Georgia, i., 355, 357.
- DALGOROUSKI, PRINCESS, A friend of Mr. Buchanan, i., 155.
- DALLAS, GEO. M., Vice President, i., 528.
- DASCHKAW, COUNT, Grand Master of Ceremonies at St. Petersburg, i., 206.
- DAVIDSON, DR., Principal of Dickinson College, i., 4.
- DAVIS, JEFFERSON, Secretary of War, Conversation in regard to appointments, ii., 78, 81; Theory of, on secession, 328, note; Senator from Mississippi, 360; Vote on Crittenden Compromise, 423; Course on secession, 424 et seq.; Assumes the Presidency of the Confederate States, 470, 484, note, 485 et seq., 489.
- DAVIS, JOHN, Senator from Massachusetts, i., 345.
- DAVYDOFF, MR., Accompanies Mr. Buchanan to the American Institute, i., 201.
- DAYTON, MR., Candidate for Vice Presidency, ii., 177.
- DEDAL, MR., Dines at Prince Lieven's, i., 224.
- DEMOCRATS, Who were, in 1828, i., 52; Who were, in 1832, 231, 232.
- DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION, Course in 1860, ii., 237 et seq.; Becomes divided, 288, note; Factions of, 289.
- DEMOCRATIC PARTY, Platform of, ii., 8, note.
- DERRICK, A. H., Letter to Mr. Buchanan, ii., 591.
- DEVITCHER, Monastery of, i., 198.
- DIARIST, The anonymous, confuted, ii., 393, 395.
- DIARY of a public man, ii., 391, note.
- DICKERSON, MAHLON, Senator from New Jersey, i., 58.
- DICKINSON, DANIEL S., Candidate for nomination, ii., 34.
- DICKINSON COLLEGE, Mr. Buchanan a graduate of, i., 4-6.
- DINO, DUCHESSE DE, Wife of Prince Talleyrand's nephew, Dines at Prince Lieven's, i., 224.
- DIPLOMATIC INTRIGUES, i., 167.
- DIX, JOHN A., Letter of, to Mr. Buchanan, ii., 288, note; Secretary of Treasury, 401; Letters of, 401, 495, 514; Letters to Mr. Buchanan, 533, 537, 543, 551, 556, 563.
- DIXON, MR., Senator from Kentucky, ii., 194.
- DOUGLAS DEMOCRATS, ii., 603.
- DOUGLAS, MR., Candidate for nomination, ii., 34; Author of Kansas-Nebraska Act, 195; Discussion by, 195 et seq.; Nomination of, 288, 360.
- DROGOMIROV, BARRIER DE, i., 198.
- DUANE, MR., Secretary of Treasury, i., 205, 297.
- DURHAM, LORD, How received at St. Petersburg, i., 150.
- EATON, JOHN H., Reference by General Jackson in 1827, i., 53; Colleague and friend of General Jackson in Senate, 42; Letters to Mr. Buchanan, 130, 131, 132.
- ELDON, LORD, Reference to letters of, i., 533.
- ELECTIONS, Interference of Federal officers with, i., 378; Result of, in 1856, ii., 177; Author's comments upon, 177.

- ELIZABETH, EMPRESS of Russia, Reference to, i., 204.
- ELLMAKER, AMOS, Letter of, i., 19; Candidate for election to the Senate in 1834, 231.
- ELLSWORTH, MR., Action in regard to impeachment of Judge Peck, i., 108.
- EMINENT MEN in Congress, notices by Mr. Buchanan, i., 25-30.
- ENGLAND, Threatened war with, i., 553; Relation of the United States towards, ii., 212; Her protectorate over the Mosquito coast, 212.
- ESTCOURT, COLONEL BUCKNALL, British Commissioner to United States, i., 604.
- ESTERHAZY, PRINCE, Dines at Prince Lieven's, i., 224; Dines at Lord Palmerston's, 225.
- ETIQUETTE, A question of court, met by Mr. Buchanan, ii., 105 et seq.
- EVERETT, EDWARD, Supports administration of John Q. Adams, i., 58; Peroration of, 63, note; Action on impeachment of Judge Peck, 108; Reference to, ii., 81; Letter to Mr. Buchanan, 184.
- EWING, THOMAS, Senator from Ohio, i., 232; Reference to, ii., 9.
- EXECUTIVE OFFICERS, Removal by President, i., 281; President Jackson attacked for, 281.
- EXPUNGING RESOLUTION of Mr. Benton, i., 291.
- FAIRFIELD, JOHN, Reference to, i., 519.
- FARRAGUT, ADMIRAL, Victories of, ii., 626.
- FEDERAL EXECUTIVE, Power of, i., 405.
- FEDERAL OFFICERS, Interference of, i., 379, 398.
- FEDERALISM in 1820, i., 23.
- FEDERALISTS, Opposition to the War of 1812, i., 8; A political sermon, 8, note.
- FERDINAND, KING of Spain, Reported death contradicted, i., 149.
- FIGLEMONT, COUNT, Austrian Ambassador at Russian Court, i., 143.
- FILLMORE, MILLARD, Accession to Presidency, ii., 10, 35, 45, 81.
- FLORIDA, Secession of, ii., 427.
- FLOYD, JOHN B., Secretary of War, ii., 193; Resignation of, 406, 409 et seq.; Supposed distribution of arms by, 411, 416.
- FORCE BILL, Introduction of, into the Senate, i., 183.
- FOREIGN RELATIONS during Mr. Buchanan's administration, ii., 211, 227.
- FORSYTH, JOHN, Minister to Mexico in 1856, quoted, ii., 215.
- FORTIFICATION BILL, Amendment of, i., 240; Opposed by Mr. Webster and Mr. Clay, 240; Vindication by Mr. Buchanan, 241; Fails to become a law, 242.
- FOULKE, JOSEPH, Member of Society of Friends, ii., 181.
- FRANCE, Conduct of, i., 234 et seq.; How viewed by Mr. Buchanan, 236; Danger of war with, 237; Recommendation by President of partial non-intercourse with, 237; Mr. Buchanan's opinion of this measure, 238 et seq.; Mediation of Great Britain, 280.
- FRANKING PRIVILEGE, ii., 610.
- FRANKLIN, WALTER, Judge, impeached, and defended by Mr. Buchanan, i., 16.
- FRELINGHUYSEN, THEODORE, Senator from New Jersey, i., 232.
- FREMONT, GENERAL, Candidate for Presidency, ii., 177.
- FRIENDS, RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF, Memorial of reception in Senate, i., 319; Mr. Buchanan's views concerning, 320 et seq.
- "GALAXY," Knot of young men from South Carolina, i., 26.
- GALITZIN, PRINCE, Dinner given by, i., 211.
- GALLATIN, ALBERT, Eligibility to Senate, i., 304; Reference to, by Mr. Letcher in 1825, 508.
- GALLIARD, JOHN, Senator from Louisiana, i., 25.
- GEARY, Governor of Kansas, Resignation of, ii., 198.

- GEORGE IV., King of England, i., 217, note; Friendship for Prince Esterhazy, i., 225.
- GEORGIA, Secession of, ii., 427.
- GERMAINS, LORD ST., Guest at White House, ii. 238.
- GEVERS, MR., Accompanies Mr. Buchanan as far as Cronstadt, i., 217.
- GLADSTONE, HON. WM., Chancellor of Exchequer, ii., 104.
- GORHAM, BENJAMIN, Enters House of Representatives with Mr. Buchanan, i., 25; Opposes the new tariff, 36.
- GOVERNMENT, CONFEDERATE, Commissioners sent from, 485, 490.
- GOVERNMENT, Federal and State, i., 401; Attitude left in by Mr. Buchanan, ii., 501, 506.
- GRAHAM, SIR JAMES, First Lord of the Admiralty, ii., 105.
- GRAHAM, WM. A., Secretary of Navy, ii., 11.
- GRANT, GENERAL, Rising reputation of, ii., 626.
- GRANVILLE, EARL, President of the Council, ii., 104.
- GREELEY, HORACE, Action on secession, ii., 427 et seq.; Opposition to coercion, 428.
- GREEN, DUFF, References to, i., 55; Visits President elect, Mr. Lincoln, ii., 426; Letter of, 426.
- GRETSCH, MR., Editor of the *Bee*, at St. Petersburg, i., 193; Visits the cathedral with Mr. Buchanan, 199.
- GRIER, MR. JUSTICE, Successor of Mr. Justice Baldwin, i., 563, note.
- GRIMES, MR., of Iowa, ii., 514.
- GROW, MR., of Pennsylvania, ii., 491.
- GRUNDY, FELIX, Senator from Tennessee, Reference to, as, i., 96; Reference to remarks of, 346.
- GUADALUPE-HIDALGO, Treaty of, signed i., 601.
- GUIZOT, M., Present at death-bed of Princess Lieven, i., 218, note; Reference to, 568.
- HALE, JOHN P., Senator from New Hampshire, ii., 361.
- HALL, NATHAN K., Postmaster General, ii., 11.
- HAMILTON, ALEXANDER, Reference to, i., 225.
- HARRIS, MR., American chargé d'affaires in Paris, i., 219.
- HASTINGS, WARREN, Impeachment of, i., 302.
- HAYNE, J. W., Visits the President, ii., 452, 487.
- HAYNE, ROBERT G., Senator from South Carolina, i., 58; Debate with Mr. Webster on nullification, i., 183; Reference to, ii., 161.
- HENRY, J. BUCHANAN, Domestic circle of Mr. Buchanan described by, i., 534; Reference to, ii., 161; Account of inauguration by, 187; Account of incidents of administration, 235; On Mr. Buchanan's character, 671 et seq.
- HENSEL, W. U., Account of ex-President Buchanan's journey from Washington to Wheatland, ii., 507 et seq.
- HERALD, The New York, President Buchanan's appeal to editor of, ii., 431.
- HERBERT, SIDNEY, Secretary of War, ii., 104.
- HEYTESBURY, LORD, English ambassador at Russian court, i., 143.
- HICKMAN, MR., of Pennsylvania, ii., 491.
- HOLLAND, LADY, Reference to, i., 218; ii., 161.
- HOLLAND, SIR HENRY, Reference to, ii., 151; Letter to Mr. Buchanan, 231; Guest at White House, 238; Letter to Mr. Buchanan, 592.
- HOLT, J., Secretary of War, Note to President concerning Fort Pickens, ii., 462; Letter to officers at Fort Pickens, 464 and note; Answer to demand by Governor Pickens for surrender of Fort Sumter, 457 et seq.; Note to President on defence of Washington City, 492; Memorandum of President on, 493; Letter to President Lincoln, 498; Letters to Mr. Buchanan, 531, 536, 550.
- HOPKINS, MR., of Lancaster, Mr. Buchanan studies law with, i., 7.

- HOUSTON, GEN. SAMUEL, Conversations in 1824-5 on election of Gen. Jackson, i., 514, note.
- HUGHES, BISHOP, Offered a mission to Mexico, ii., 627, 628.
- HUNTER, SENATOR, ii., 485.
- IMPEACHMENT of Judge Franklin, i., 16; Ably defended by Mr. Buchanan, 17; Of Judge James H. Peck, managers appointed to conduct the, on part of House of Representatives, 108; Article of, prepared by Mr. Buchanan, 108.
- INCENDIARY PUBLICATIONS, Bill to restrain use of mails for circulation of, i., 338; Mr. Webster's remarks on, 339.
- INGERSOLL, MR., American Minister at London, ii., 100.
- INSTRUCTION, Doctrine of, i., 229, 230; Mr. Webster's views on, quoted, 230, note.
- INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS, Meaning of, i., 35; Mr. Buchanan's course in regard to, 79, 80 et seq.
- ISCHERMOFF, Reference to, i., 195.
- IVAN VELIKOI, Belfry of St. John's Church, Moscow, i., 197.
- JACKSON, ANDREW, The President, Candidate for Presidency in 1824, i., 38; Receives unanimous vote of what States, 39; Letters to Mr. Buchanan, 45, 47, 48, 49; Wrong impressions concerning Mr. Buchanan's conversation, 1824-5, 50; Integrity of, 51; Letter to Mr. Buchanan, 53; Increased popularity in 1826, 70; Election of, to Presidency, 94; Supposed illiteracy of, 129, note; Letter to Mr. Eaton, 132; Course in regard to Russian complaint of American press, 176; Proclamation against nullifiers, 183; Views on nullification, 185; Regard for Emperor of Russia, 213; References to, 224, 228; Second election of, 231; Opposition in Senate to administration of, 231 and note; Message in regard to France in 1834, 235, note; Reception in Paris as a threat, 237; Partial non-intercourse with France recommended by, 237; Reference to action of, by Mr. Buchanan, 255; Reference to, by Mr. Buchanan, 257, 258; Reference to message of, 272; Secretary of Treasury removed by, 281; Attacked by opposition for removal, 281; Speech of Mr. Buchanan on bill regulating removals, 281 et seq.; Second administration of, 315; Special recommendation in Dec., 1835, 338; Devotion of followers of, 407; Reference to, ii., 47, 49; Message of, 274, note; Action of, against nullifiers, 302, 361; Excitement on election of Mr. Adams in 1825, 506, 508, 514.
- JAMES, MR., Senator from Rhode Island, ii., 195, note.
- JAY, JOHN, Reference to, i., 506.
- JEFFERSON, THOMAS, Reference by Mr. Buchanan to administration of, i., 263; Reference to message of, to Congress, 265; Reference to, by Mr. Letcher, 507; References to, ii., 47, 212, 361.
- JOHN, THE THIRD, of Russia, Reference to marriage of, i., 198.
- JOHNSON, ANDREW, The President, ii., 362.
- JOHNSON, Governor of Pennsylvania, ii., 28 et seq.
- JOHNSON, REVERDY, Attorney General ii., 9.
- JUDGE, THOMAS J., Commissioner from Alabama, ii., 487.
- JUDICIARY ACT, Proposed repeal resisted by Mr. Buchanan, i., 111; Report on, 111; Twenty-fifth section of, 114.
- JUDICIARY COMMITTEE, Views on extension of Circuit Courts, i., 95.
- JUDICIAL SYSTEM, i., 95; Mr. Buchanan's views on, 95 et seq.
- KANSAS, Conflict of parties in, ii., 197; Convention of anti-slavery party at Topeka in, 197; Mr. Buchanan's letter on, 199, 208.
- KANSAS-NEBRASKA Act, ii., 204.

- KARAMSEN, MR.; Russian historian, i., 203.
- KENT, GOVERNOR, Reference to death of, i., 512.
- KENTUCKY, Resolution of legislature on election of 1824, i., 39.
- KERN, COL. JACOB, Speaker of Senate of Pennsylvania, i., 228.
- KING, JOHN P., Senator, i., 324.
- KING, REV. DR. JOHN, Pastor in Mercersburg, i., 4, 5.
- KING, RUFUS, Senator, i., 25; Remarks of, 304.
- KING, WM. R., Senator, elected to Vice Presidency, ii., 35, 40, 43, 69.
- KREMER, GEORGE, Reference to, by General Jackson, i., 55.
- KRUDENER, BARON, Reference to, i., 152; Russian minister at Washington, i., 162; Action as minister, 175.
- LAFAYETTE, GENERAL, Visited by Mr. Buchanan, i., 220; Policy of, 221; Loss of popularity in France, 221; Loses confidence in Louis Philippe, 221; Assists in regard to French treaty, 223; References to, by Mr. Buchanan, 244.
- LANCASTER, City of, Alarm at, in 1863, ii., 609.
- LANE, ELLIOTT ESKRIDGE, Reference to, i., 531.
- LANE, JAMES B., Reference to, i., 531.
- LANE, MARY ELIZABETH SPEER, Sister of Miss Harriet, Reference to, i., 531.
- LANE, MISS HARRIET, Niece of Mr. Buchanan, i., 22; Is brought to Lancaster, 531; Education conducted by Mr. Buchanan, 531; Where finished, 532; Becomes a member of Mr. Buchanan's household, 534; School-girl life, 535; Social position in England, ii., 142; Letters to Mrs. Baker, 142, 146, note, 147, note; Accompanies Mr. Buchanan from Washington to Wheatland in 1861, 506; marriage of, 631, 632.
- LANE, MRS. ELLIOTT T., i., 531.
- LANDDOWN, MARQUIS OF, Reference to, ii., 104.
- LAVAL, COUNT, Chief censor of Russian Press, i., 150.
- LAWRENCE, HON. ABBOTT, ii., 151.
- LAW, SALIQUE, Abolition of, by Ferdinand of Spain, i., 149.
- LAZAREFF, MESSIEURS, Armenian noblemen, founders of Armenian Institute, i., 201.
- LECOMPTON, Convention of slavery party at, ii., 198, 201, 202; The constitution of, 206.
- LE FEVRE, DR., Physician of British embassy at Russian court, Reference to, i., 148.
- LEIGH, BENJAMIN W., Senator from Virginia, Reference to, i., 323; Action on slavery, 335.
- LEIPER, MR., Letters to, ii., 604, 613, 622, 624.
- LETCHER, R. P., Conversation in Jan., 1825, ii., 507, 509; Letters to Mr. Buchanan, 510, 512; Reference to, 514.
- LIEVEN, PRINCESS, Reference to, 217; Dinner at, 224, 225.
- LINCOLN, ABRAHAM, The President, Reference to, ii., 301, note; Troops present at inauguration of, 301, note; Election to Presidency, 315; Policy shaped by Mr. Seward, 351, note; President elect, journey to Washington, 477, 478; Tenor of his public speeches on the way, 477, 478; Action of, towards Montgomery commissioners, 484; Inauguration of, 497; Mr. Buchanan's account of events on March 4th, 1861, 497; Address "to whom it may concern," 624.
- LIVINGSTON, EDWARD, Senator from Louisiana, Action on proposed abolition of offices, i., 71; Becomes Secretary of State, 132, note; Letter to Mr. Buchanan, 132, 135.
- LOMONOSOFF, MR., Dines at Prince Lieven's, i., 224.
- LORD, REV. DR., On abolitionism, ii., 607.
- LOUIS PHILIPPE, KING, Course toward Russia, i., 149; References to, 221, 223, 233; Character of, 571.

- LOUISIANA, Secession of, ii, 427.
- LOWNDES, WILLIAM, Representative from South Carolina, Reference to, i., 25; Character described by Mr. Buchanan, 26, 27 et seq., 29, note.
- LOWTHER, LORD, Reference to, i., 218.
- LYTTLETON, LADY, Reference to, i., 604.
- MACALESTER, LILY L., Letter to Mr. Buchanan, ii., 244; Mr. Buchanan's answer, 245.
- MACGREGOR, HON. JAMES, Letter on election, to Mr. Buchanan, ii., 178.
- MACON, NATHANIEL, Senator from Georgia, Reference to, i., 25, 58.
- MADISON, JAMES, The President, Reference to, on President's power to remove officers, i., 285; Reference to, on sedition law, 390; Reference to, as a member of Mr. Jefferson's cabinet, 508; References to, ii., 47, 161; Opposed to use of force against a State, 327.
- MAILS. See Incendiary Publications.
- MALAHIDE, LADY TALBOT DE, Reference to, ii., 153.
- MANGUM, WILLIE P., Senator from North Carolina, Reference to, i., 331.
- MARCY, WM. L., Candidate for nomination, ii., 34; Letters to Mr. Buchanan, 35 et seq., 75, 80, 81, 90; Secretary of State, 106; Despatch to Mr. Buchanan, 111, 116; Course of, 135.
- MARITIME TREATY, Report of Mr. Buchanan on, to Secretary of State, i., 172.
- MARKLEY, PHILIP S., Advocate of Mr. Clay for Presidency in 1824, i., 42; Conversation with Mr. Buchanan in 1824, 51, 54.
- MARLY, PALACE OF, Reference to, i., 207.
- MARTIN, DR., Reference to, i., 518.
- MATUSCERVIE, COUNT, Resident at English palace at Peterhoff, Reference to, i., 206.
- MAURY, MRS. SARAH M., Letters to Mr. Buchanan, i., 610, 612, 613, 614, 615.
- MAXIMILIAN, EMPIRE OF, Reference to, ii., 222.
- MCCLELLAN, GEORGE B., Nomination for Presidency, ii., 624, 625; His letter of acceptance commended, 626.
- MCCOOK, GEORGE W., Ohio, Reference to, ii., 520.
- MCDUFFIE, GEORGE, Opposes Mr. Chilton's resolution of abolition of offices, i., 71; Manager on impeachment of Judge Peck, 108.
- MCINTIRE, PETER, Nominated by President as United States Collector at Custom House in Charleston, ii., 483; Senate refuses to act upon nomination, 483.
- MCLANE, LOUIS, Reference to, i., 26; Opposed to administration of John Q. Adams, 58; Letter to Mr. Buchanan, 191; Becomes Secretary of State, 191, note; Despatch to, by Mr. Buchanan, 212; Reference to interview of M. Serrurier with, 254; Reference to letter to M. Serrurier, the French minister, 255; Minister of United States at London, 553; Letter from Mr. Buchanan, 558; Reference to ability of, by Lord Lansdown, 569; Recalled from London, 574.
- MCLANE, ROBERT M., Minister to Mexico, Reference to, ii., 218; Treaty made by, 222.
- MERCERSBURG, Early residence at, by Mr. Buchanan's father, i., 2.
- MEREDITH, WM. M., Correspondence with Mr. Buchanan in regard to Wheatland, ii., 2, 3 et seq.; Secretary of Treasury, 9.
- MESSAGE, President's annual, of Dec., 1858, Reference to, ii., 108; Special, of Jan. 8th, 1861, Reference to, 433, 438.
- METTERNICH, PRINCE, Feeling towards American people, i., 225.
- MEXICO, Origin of war with, i., 579; War declared, 599; Consequences of war with, ii., 5; Relations of United States with, 215; Description of, by Mr. Buchanan, 215 et seq.
- MICHAEL, ST., THE ARCHANGEL, Cathedral, visited by Mr. Buchanan, i., 199.

- MICHEL, GRAND DUKE, Reference to, i., 207.
- MICHIGAN, Admission into the Union, i., 358; Speech by Mr. Buchanan in favor of admission, 358 et seq.
- MILITIA, In the service of the United States, i., 16.
- MINISTER, ENGLISH, Recall of the, ii., 135.
- MISSION TO ST. PETERSBURG, Correspondence with Mr. Buchanan as to, i., 130, 131, 132.
- MISSISSIPPI, Secession of, ii., 427.
- MISSOURI COMPROMISE, The repeal of, ii., 194; The effect, 185, 197.
- MISSOURI COMPROMISE LINE, Mr. Buchanan's course on, i., 544.
- MOLESWORTH, SIR WM., First commissioner of public works, Reference to, ii., 105.
- MONROE DOCTRINE, Characterized by Lord Clarendon, ii., 132.
- MONROE, JAMES, Administration of, i., 23-37; First and second elections of, 23; Cabinet of, 24; Veto message on Cumberland Road bill, 35; Speech of Mr. Buchanan on, 83 et seq.; Message of, on Cumberland Road, 87.
- MONTGOMERY COMMISSIONERS, Appointment of, to Washington, ii., 477.
- MORAN, B., Secretary of American Legation, Letter to Mr. Buchanan, ii., 234.
- MORE, HANNAH, Comment of, upon Pope, i., 574.
- MORTIER, MARSHAL, Duke of Treviso, French ambassador at Russian court, i., 143; Dinner given to, 149; Called upon by Mr. Buchanan, 220.
- MOSCOW, Visit to, by Mr. Buchanan, i., 194; Appearance described, 194 et seq.
- MUHLENBERG, PETER, Reference to, by Mr. Letcher, i., 513.
- MYER, DOCTOR, An agent from St. Petersburg, i., 197.
- NAPOLEON III., EMPEROR, Attempted assassination of, ii., 146; Power of, 152; Designs in regard to Mexico, 220; Interference of, 222.
- NAVIGATION, Interests of, i., 78.
- NEGRO SUFFRAGE, Reference to, ii., 658, 659.
- NELSON, JOHN, of Maryland, Mr. Buchanan enters House of Representatives with, i., 25.
- NEOPHYTE, Russian archimandrite, i., 204.
- NESSELRODE, COUNT, Return of, to the capital, i., 149; Reference to, by Mr. Buchanan, 152; Head of Russian chancery, 161; Descent of, 161; Feelings of, towards Mr. Buchanan, 163; Undisposed towards commercial treaty, 163; Interview with, described by Mr. Buchanan, 167; Action on commercial treaty, 165 et seq.; Freedom of American press not understood by, 180; Interview with Mr. Buchanan, 207, 210; Mr. Buchanan takes leave of, 215.
- NEUTRALS, Conduct of England towards, ii., 134.
- NEVIN, REV. DR., Letter to Mr. Buchanan, ii., 644; His funeral sermon, preached at the obsequies of Mr. Buchanan, 681.
- NEWCASTLE, DUKE OF, Secretary for the Colonies, ii., 104; Guest at White House, 238.
- NICHOLAS, EMPEROR, of Russia, Reference to, i., 142; Referred to, by Mr. Buchanan, 223.
- NICHOLAS, MR., Senator from Louisiana, i., 310.
- NIESCHOUCHIN, Garden of, i., 198.
- NILES, MR., American chargé d'affaires at Paris, i., 249.
- NOVASELSEFF, MADAME, Mr. Buchanan dines with, i., 195.
- NOVOGOROD, Mr. Buchanan visits, i., 193.
- NULLIFICATION, Debate on, in the Senate, i., 183; Ordinance of, 185 and note.
- O'CONOR, CHARLES, Political opinions of, ii., 619.
- OFFICIAL ORGAN, Charges against, by Baron Krudener, Russian chargé at Washington, i., 175; Mr. Buchanan's

- interview with Count Nesselrode on this subject, 180 et seq.
- OMPTEDA, PRINCE, Dines with Lord Palmerston, i., 225.
- OREGON, Dispute between England and United States on title to territory of, i., 551 et seq.; Mr. Buchanan's course as Secretary of State in regard to, 552; Cabinet consultation in regard to, 555; Mr. Buchanan's interview with Mr. Pakenham, British minister at Washington, 555 et seq.; Settlement of Oregon question, 560, 577. See note.
- ORLOFF, Aide de Camp of Emperor, Reference to, i., 195.
- ORR, JAMES L., Commissioner from South Carolina, Reference to, ii., 377.
- OSTEND CIRCULAR, The, Reference to, ii., 136 et seq.
- OTHO, PRINCE, of Bavaria, Reference to, i., 248.
- OUROUSSOFF, PRINCE, Visited by Mr. Buchanan, i., 196, 202.
- OUSELEY, SIR WILLIAM AND LADY, Reference to, ii., 153, 160.
- OXFORD, Commemoration day at, ii. 147, note.
- PAGEOT, MR., Reference to letter of Duke de Broglie to, i., 259; French chargé d'affaires at Washington, Action of, on French treaty, 275.
- PAKENHAM, MR., British minister at Washington, Course on Oregon question, i., 552, 553, 554 et seq.
- PALMERSTON, LORD, Dines at Prince Lieven's, i., 224; Referred to by Mr. King, 569; Home Department, ii., 104, 109; Premier, 118, 123, 184.
- PANAMA, President's message on mission to, i., 64.
- PARAGUAY, Expedition to, ii., 224; Account of, by Mr. Buchanan, 224 et seq.
- PAREDES, Declared President of Mexico, i., 593; Refuses to receive Mr. Slidell, 599.
- PARIS, Mr. Buchanan arrives at, i., 219.
- PARKER, MISS HETTY, Mr. Buchanan's housekeeper, i., 534.
- PARLIAMENT, Opening of, Mr. Buchanan's absence from, ii., 110.
- PARTIES, State of, i., 57, 231.
- PASCHKOFFS, MADAME, Party given by, i., 199.
- PAXTON, REV. WM. M., D.D., Conversation of, with Mr. Buchanan, on religion, ii., 670 et seq.
- PEACE CONVENTION, Account of, by Mr. Buchanan, ii., 439 et seq.
- PECK, JAMES H., Impeachment of, course of Mr. Buchanan on, i., 107, 109.
- PEDRO, DON, Reference to, i., 149.
- PEEL, SIR ROBERT, Timidity of, i., 218; Course on Oregon, 566, 574.
- PENSACOLA, Harbor of, Reference to, ii., 461.
- PENNSYLVANIA, Invasion of, by the Confederates, ii., 609.
- PETERHOFF, Fate of, attended by Mr. Buchanan, i., 206.
- PETITION, The right of, Reference to, i., 323, 338.
- PICKENS, FORT, Charge of General Scott in regard to, ii., 461 et seq., 465; Qualified armistice respecting, 465.
- PICKENS, F. W., Governor of South Carolina, Letter to Mr. Buchanan, i., 608; Letter to the President, quoted, ii., 333; Letter to President demanding surrender of Fort Sumter, 456; His urgency to have Fort Sumter taken, 476.
- PIERCE, GEN. FRANKLIN, Nomination for Presidency, ii., 34; Election of, 35, 40, 43; Letters to Mr. Buchanan, 68, 74, 80; Letters to Mr. Buchanan on English Mission, 86 et seq.; The President, reception of, in Philadelphia, 91.
- PINCKNEY, WILLIAM, Action in Federal convention on word "expunge," i., 310.
- PLEASANTON, STEPHEN, Reference to, i., 538, note.
- POINSETT, JOEL R., Mr. Buchanan enters House of Representatives with, i., 25.
- POLAND, Conduct of Russia in, i., 175, 179; Debate in House of Commons on affairs of, 213.



- POLEVVOY, MR., Editor of *Moscow Telegraph*, Reference to, i., 202.
- POLIGNAC, PRINCE, Reference to, i., 218.
- POLK, JAMES K., The President, Opposes administration of John Q. Adams, i., 58; His chances of election in 1844, 511; Election to Presidency, 520, 543; Letter to Mr. Buchanan, 522; Administration of, 579; Attitude towards Texas, 582, note; Letter to Mr. Buchanan, 589; Administration of, ii., 81.
- POLYCARPE, an archimandrite, i., 204.
- PORTER, ALEXANDER, Senator, References to, i., 328, 333, 335.
- PORTRAITS of Mr. Buchanan, ii., 672, note.
- POUSSIN, MAJOR GENERAL, Reference to, i., 220.
- PRESIDENT, Election in 1824, i., 38; Election of, devolves upon House of Representatives, 39; Ineligibility of, 92.
- PRESS, AMERICAN, Complaints about, i., 175; Mr. Buchanan's course in regard to, 175; Baron Sacken's imprudent note, 177; Liberty of, 345.
- PRESTON, WM. C., Senator from South Carolina, Remarks on abolition of slavery referred to, i., 321, 335; Course on Texas, 370, 376.
- PRUSSIA, KING OF, Reference to, i., 219.
- PUBLIC DEPOSITS, Removal from Bank of United States, i., 291.
- QUAKER MEMORIAL, Reception in Senate, i., 319; Mr. Buchanan's remarks concerning, 319 et seq.
- "RADICALS" in 1820-21, Reference to, i., 24.
- RANDOLPH, JOHN, of Roanoke, Reference to, i., 26; Character of, 29; Opposes administration of John Q. Adams, 58; Minister to Russia, 129; Reference to, 189; Death of, 205.
- RANLETT, CAPTAIN, Reference to, i., 207.
- RASOUMOFFSKY, COUNT, Russian nobleman, References to, i., 200.
- READ, JOHN M., Reference to, by Mr. Buchanan, i., 527.
- "REBEL RAID" into Pennsylvania, ii., 622.
- REPUBLICANS, NATIONAL, Who were called, in 1825, i., 57.
- REPUBLICAN PARTY comes into the field, ii., 174.
- RESIGNATION OF GEN. CASS, ii., 396, 401; Of J. Thomson, 401, 405; Of Philip F. Thomas, 404 et seq.; John B. Floyd, 406, 410, 415.
- RESOLUTION offered in the Senate censuring Mr. Buchanan, ii., 600, 601.
- RETRENCHMENT, Political cry of, i., 70; Discussion of, 70; Mr. Buchanan's course on, 72.
- RIGNY, COUNT DE, Reference to note to, by Mr. Livingston, i., 245; Reference to, 257; Mr. Livingston's conference with, 269.
- RIVES, W. C., Senator from Virginia, Reference to, i., 379.
- ROGERS, HON. MILTON C., Reference to, i., 41, note.
- ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIESTS sent to the army by President Polk, ii., 627, 628.
- ROMANOFF, House of, i., 204.
- ROOSEVELT, MR. JAMES J., i., 518, note.
- ROOSEVELT, MRS. JAMES J., i., 518.
- ROWAN, JOHN, Senator from Kentucky, Reference to, i., 58.
- RURICK, Family of, Reference to, i., 203.
- RUSH, RICHARD, Reference to, i., 45; Letters to Mr. Buchanan, 572, 573, 604, 605, 607.
- RUSSELL, LORD JOHN, Reference to, i., 569; Ministerial leader of House of Commons, ii., 104.
- RUSSIA, THE EMPRESS OF, Reference to, i., 143; Despotism in, 187.
- SACKEN, BARON, Russian chargé at Washington, i., 175; Reference to letter to Secretary of State, 175; Course on subject of American press, 176.
- SARGEANT, JOHN, Representative from Pennsylvania, Reference to, i., 26;

- Character of, 29; Candidate of Whigs for Vice Presidency, 231.
- SAULSBURY, SENATOR, Letter from, ii., 601.
- SAUVEUR, ST., Cathedral visited by Mr. Buchanan, i., 198.
- SCHUYLER, GENERAL, Reference to, i., 225.
- SCOTT, DRED, Case of, ii., 205.
- SCOTT, GEN. WINFIELD, Placed in command of United States army, i., 601; His plan of campaign, 603; Claim of, to the command, 605; Nomination for Presidency, ii., 35; Electoral votes obtained by, 35, 45, 47; Civil qualifications for Presidency, 49; Views of, 297, 314; Mr. Buchanan's reasons for not acting upon them, 309, 314; Arrival in Washington, 365; Interview with President Buchanan, 365; Advises the President, 365, 368; Blunder of, 416 et seq.; Note to President, 445; Action of, 445 et seq.; Memorandum for Secretary of War, 448; Charge against Mr. Buchanan, 462.
- SEARCH, RIGHT OF, How dealt with by President Buchanan, ii., 213 et seq.
- SEATON, MISS JOSEPHINE, Letter to Mr. Buchanan, ii., 589.
- SEFTON, THE EARL AND COUNTESS OF, Reference to, i., 224.
- SENATE, The great leaders in the, i., 293.
- SERRURIER, MR., References to, by Mr. Buchanan, i., 257, 260.
- SÉVIGNÉ, MADAME DE, Reference to letters of, i., 534.
- SEWARD, WM. H., Letter to C. F. Adams, ii., 351, note; Action as Secretary of State towards Montgomery commissioners, 484; Charge against Mr. Buchanan concerning Federal marines, 513.
- SEYMOUR, HORATIO, as Governor, ii., 610.
- SHERMAN, GENERAL, Victories of, ii., 626.
- SIERGE, ST., Shrine of, i., 202.
- SILSBEE, NATHANIEL, Senator from Massachusetts, Reference to, i., 58.
- SLAVERY, First introduction of subject in the Senate, i., 315; Petitions for abolition of, 315; Subject again discussed, 338; Summary of the questions on, ii., 262, 285; Under the Constitution, 263 et seq.; Anti-organization of societies of, 273; Justification of, 275 et seq.; Emancipation in Virginia, 277 et seq.
- SLIDELL, JOHN, Mission to Mexico, i., 591, note; Letters to Mr. Buchanan, 593, 601; Letter to President Polk in regard to Mexico, 603; Sketch by Mr. Barlow, ii., 173, note; Note to Mr. Buchanan, 445, note; Mr. Buchanan's reply, 445, note.
- SLOAN, MR., Member of House from Ohio, i., 507.
- SMITH, GEO. PLUMER, Statement by, of origin of cabinet scene, ii., 520 et seq.
- SMITH, MRS. CALEB B., Letter to Mr. Buchanan, ii., 602.
- SMITH, SAMUEL, Senator from Maryland, Reference to, i., 58.
- SMITH, WILLIAM, from South Carolina, Reference to, i., 25; Senator, 58.
- SMOLENSKO, TOWN OF, Reference to, i., 198.
- SMYTH, MR., Senator from Virginia, Proposed amendment of Constitution by, i., 92.
- SOCIETY OF FRIENDS, Petition to abolish slavery in District of Columbia, i., 332.
- SOMERSET, DUCHESS OF, References to, ii., 114, 159.
- SOPHIA, ST., Church of, visited by Mr. Buchanan, i., 193; Princess, married whom, 198; Daughter of, 198.
- SOUTHARD, SAMUEL L., Secretary of Navy, Reference to, i., 24, note; Senator from New Jersey, 232; References to, by Mr. Buchanan, 244, 358, 361.
- SPAIN, Relations of the United States with, ii., 222; Described by Mr. Buchanan, 222 et seq.
- SPARKS, JARED, Letter to Mr. Buchanan, i., 505.
- SPECIE PAYMENTS, Suspension of, during war of 1812, i., 14.

- SPEER, ELIZABETH, Mother of President Buchanan, Her marriage, i., 3, 4.
- SPEER, JAMES, Grandfather of President Buchanan, and his wife, Mary Patterson, i., 3.
- SPENCER, AMBROSE, Manager, on part of House, on impeachment of Judge Peck, i., 108.
- SPRAGUE, PELEG, Speech on tariff, i., 74; Motion of, 75.
- STACKLEBERG, BARON, Visits Imperial House of Education with Mr. Buchanan, i., 195.
- STAFFORD, LADY, Reference to, ii., 163.
- STANTON, EDWIN M., Reference to, ii., 514; Letters to Mr. Buchanan, 528, 531, 533, 534, 535, 538, 539, 540, 541, 547, 549, 552, 553, 554, 558, 559, 640.
- STAR OF THE WEST, Fired upon, ii., 447 et seq.; Arrival off harbor of Charleston, 448.
- STATE RIGHTS, Virginia principles of, i., 24.
- STATUS QUO, Supposed pledge of, ii., 375, 382.
- STEIGLITZ, BARON, Conversation with Count Cancrène, i., 171.
- STEPHENS, ALEXANDER H., Vice President of the Southern Confederacy, ii., 476.
- STERIGERE, JOHN B., Letter of Mr. Buchanan to, i., 524.
- STEUBEN, BARON, Reference to map obtained from library of, i., 506.
- STEVENSON, ANDREW, Enters House of Representatives with Mr. Buchanan, i., 25.
- STORRS, HENRY R., Manager, on part of House, on impeachment of Judge Peck, i., 108; Action of, 108.
- STUART, ALEXANDER H. H., Secretary of Interior, ii., 11.
- STURGIS, MRS. RUSSELL, ii., 152.
- SULLIVAN, JOHN, Reference to, i., 542, note; Death of, ii., 609.
- SUMNER, SENATOR, Assault upon, ii., 175.
- SUMTER, FORT, Reference to, ii., 302, note, 445; Governor Pickens' demand for the surrender of, 456; The President's reply, 457, 460.
- SUTHERLAND, JOEL B., Candidate for election to Senate in 1834, i., 228.
- TALLEYRAND, PRINCE, Reference to, i., 161; Dines at Prince Lieven's, 234.
- TANEX, ROGER B., Letter to Mr. Buchanan, i., 133; References to, 175, 297.
- TAPPAN, BENJAMIN, U. S. Senator, Reference to, i., 519.
- TARIFF of 1823-4, Discussions on, i., 36, 74.
- TAYLOR, COL. ZACHARY, Military movement of, in Texas, i., 596; The President, Character of, ii., 6; Nomination of, for Presidency, 7; Election of, 8; Administration of, 9 et seq.; Death of, 10, 49.
- TCHENCHINE, MR., Principal Director of Alexander Institution, Reference to, i., 201.
- TELEGRAPHIC DESPATCH to Montgomery from Charleston via Augusta, ii., 476.
- TENNYSON, The poet, Reference to, ii., 147, note.
- TEXAS, Independence of, i., 368; Affairs of, 370; Petition of Philadelphia citizens on, 370; Annexation to the Union, 543, 562; Negotiation with, 580; Proposed admission into the Union, 580; Secession of, ii., 427.
- THAL, MR., Accompanies Mr. Buchanan to the Barrier of Drogomirov, i., 198.
- THOMPSON, JACOB, Secretary of Interior, ii., 194; Resignation of, 401 et seq. Secretary of the Treasury, resignation of, 404.
- THOMPSON, MR. JUSTICE, Appointment to Supreme Court, i., 24, note.
- TICKNOR, GEORGE, Letter from Paris, quoted, i., 237.
- TIVER, a Russian town, Reference to, i., 193.
- TOD, MR. JOHN, Mr. Buchanan enters House of Representatives with, i., 25.

- TOUCEY, ISAAC, Secretary of Navy, References to, ii., 193, 513; Letters to Mr. Buchanan, 515, 620, 642.
- TRACY, ALBERT H., of Buffalo, Reference to, i., 26.
- TREATY between United States and England, Negotiation of, i., 504.
- TREATY, COMMERCIAL, with Russia, i., 161.
- TRIBUNE, The New York, Strange course of, ii., 427, 430.
- TROOPS at the Capital, ii., 491, 492, 493, 506.
- TROSTZA, Monastery of, i., 202, 203.
- TRUCE, Temporary, of Major Anderson, ii., 449, 454.
- TSCHERBATOFF, PRINCESS, Reference to, i., 153.
- TSIDORE, Monk, Reference to, i., 204.
- TYLER, JOHN, President, References to, i., 495, 528, note; Marriage of, 529, note; Cabinet of, 543; Attitude towards Texas, 581; Letters of, to President Buchanan, ii., 466, 467, 469; Commissioner, 472; Interview with the President, 472; Note of, 489.
- UNITED STATES. See Constitution.
- VAIL, AARON, American chargé in London, Reference to, i., 146; Dines at Prince Lieven's, 224.
- VAN BUREN, JOHN, Reference to, ii., 603.
- VAN BUREN, MARTIN, Senator from New York, Reference to, i., 25, 58; Secretary of State, 132, note; Vice President, 231; Democratic candidate for Presidency in 1837, 232; Reference to, 394; Pretensions to Presidency, 517; Reference to, 519; Conduct of, 524; Relations to election of 1844, reference to, 550; Attitude towards Texas, 581; Nomination of, ii., 9.
- VERNON, MOUNT, Reference to, ii., 230.
- VETO POWER, Mr. Buchanan's reply to Mr. Clay on, i., 472, 504, 550.
- VICTORIA, QUEEN, Satisfaction in regard to Oregon settlement, i., 604; Cabinet of, ii., 104; Ministry of, 105; Accession of, 105; Letters to Mr. Buchanan, 231, 233.
- VIRGINIA, Intervention to prevent war, ii., 471, 478; President Buchanan's message to Congress, 479, 484.
- VOLUNTEERS, President Buchanan's reasons for not calling for, ii., 501.
- WALES, PRINCE OF, Arrives in Washington, ii., 230; Becomes a guest at the White House, 230; Letter to Mr. Buchanan, 590.
- WALKER, ROBERT J., Secretary of Treasury under President Polk, i., 540; Territorial Governor of Kansas, ii., 198; Instructions given to, by President, 198; Attempted insurrection suppressed by, 201.
- WALL, GARRET D., Senator from New Jersey, Reference to, i., 379.
- WALWORTH, REUBEN H., Enters House of Representatives with Mr. Buchanan, i., 25.
- WARD, COMMANDER, Expedition organized for, ii., 621.
- WASHINGTON, PRESIDENT, Message in 1796, referred to, i., 364; Reference to, ii., 47, 60.
- WEBSTER, DANIEL, Speech on the war of 1812, i., 13, note; Supports administration of John Q. Adams, 58; Becomes a Senator, 58, note; Views on subject of protection, 74; Debate in Senate on nullification, 183; Views on question of instruction, 230, note; Opposes administration of General Jackson, 232; References to, 263, 267; Construction of Constitution by, 284; On expunging resolution, 292, 306; Reference to, 328; Opposes bill to restrain use of mails for incendiary publications, 339, 344, 350, 351, 353, 357; Treaty negotiated by, in 1842, 504; Retires from President Tyler's cabinet, 543; Attitude towards Texas, 581, note; Opinion on Texas question, 582; Secretary of State, ii., 11, 35; Relations to question of right of search, 213, 361.

- WEED, THURLOW, Reference to, ii., 51.
- WELLESLEY, MARCHIONESS OF, Sister of Lady Stafford, ii., 102.
- WELLINGTON, DUKE OF, Described by Prince Lieven, i., 218; Reference to, ii., 105.
- WESSENBERG, BARON, Dines at Prince Lieven's, i., 224; Dines at Lord Palmerston's, 225.
- WHARTON, WILLIAM, Reference to, ii., 181.
- WHEATLAND, Purchase of, by Mr. Buchanan, ii., 1, 3.
- WHEATON, HENRY, Author of Elements of International Law, i., 218, note.
- WHIGS, Who were called, i., 231; Rivalry among, 409.
- WHITE, HUGH L., Senator from Tennessee, i., 58; References to, 290, 306.
- WICKLIFFE, CHARLES, Reference to, i., 108.
- WILCOX, MISS, Niece of Mr. Ingersoll, Reference to, ii., 100.
- WILLIAM IV., Reference to, ii., 104.
- WILMOT, PROVISO, Reference to, i., 544.
- WOOD, SIR CHARLES, President of the Board of Control, References to, ii., 105, 121.
- WOODBURY, MR. JUSTICE, Reference to, i., 175.
- WRIGHT, Governor of Indiana, Reference to, ii., 182.
- WRIGHT, SILAS, JR., References to, i., 331, 332, 366, 519, 522.
- YATES, JAMES BUCHANAN, Reference to, i., 536, note.
- ZAITSOVA, Inn at, i., 193.

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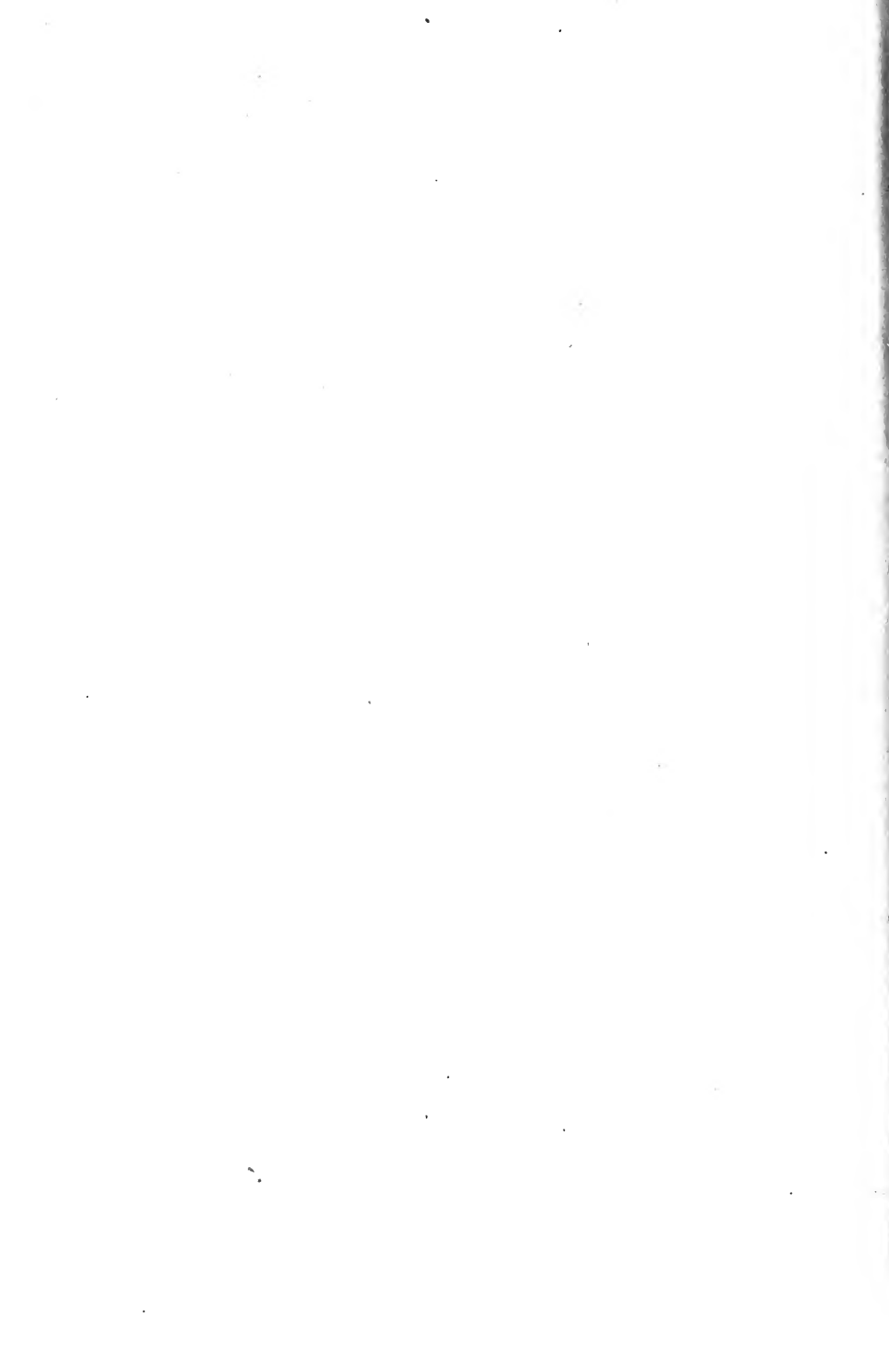
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